

AN INTRODUCTORY COURSE IN BIBLICAL PREACHING FOR CULTOR HOUSE AT

GRACE CHURCH GREENVILLE, SC

A THESIS-PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis project is to create an introductory course in biblical preaching for young men and women who have completed their university studies, who are participating in a one-year residency program called Cultor House at Grace Church in Greenville, South Carolina, and who are considering positions in church leadership.

Cultor House is a year-long residential learning community geared toward young men and women who desire to be mature in their faith, grow in their ministry capacity, and gain insight into their calling.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Need for the Study

Preaching is THE primary means through which God's kingdom is advanced. The Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1:21, "God decided, through the foolishness of our preaching, to save those who believe." It is *foolishness* because if the work of preaching is not accompanied by the Spirit, it is a wasted effort. It would be ineffectual due to a complete lack of power. We must also consider that our preaching is foolishness to the hearers, unless the Spirit gives it life in their minds and hearts. Michael J. Quicke summarizes this concept by saying, "We should never become desensitized to the fact that, within a dazzling range of divinely imaginative options, God invented and decided to use *preaching* to impact his world."¹ Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to diligently study the content, construction, and delivery of sermons for the good of our people and the world at large for the glory of God.

Preaching is a difficult discipline, and the viability of preaching is currently being challenged. J. Sittler poignantly says, "Preaching is in trouble, everywhere."² Quicke contributes to this concept by pointing out several basic challenges the discipline of

¹ Michael J. Quicke, *360-degree Preaching: Hearing, Speaking, and Living the Word*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003), 19.

² J. Sittler, *The Anguish of Preaching* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1966) in Quicke, *360-Degree Preaching*, 33.

preaching faces: a loss of holistic engagement with Scripture, a poverty of Holy Spirit power, increased pressure on preachers, fewer good models to follow, and changing times.³ With these factors and others at play, we must think deeply about teaching preaching to the next generation.

We have clearly been instructed from Scripture to train the next generation. In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul writes, “You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.” This mission is given to the church, and we must be intentional in developing people who may also teach others the gospel with skill and effectiveness. The question then becomes, who is primarily responsible for training the next generation? The church? Seminaries? A combination of the two?⁴ Are the church and seminaries separate entities, or are they “united” with different responsibilities? These questions can lead pursuers down rabbit holes, and the purpose of this study is not to answer them in full. What is clear is that the church, as an institution ordained in Scripture, must take 2 Timothy 2:2 seriously and must participate in this developmental process. What is less clear is how the church goes about teaching future pastors the discipline of preaching.

³ Quick, *360-Degree Preaching*, 38-43.

⁴ Two examples of discussions regarding these questions include: Mark Denver, “Raising Up Pastors Is the Church’s Work,” *9Marks Journal* (Jan-Feb 2009), accessed July 30, 2014, <http://www.9marks.org/journal/raising-pastors-churchs-work>; Mark Rogers, “How to Start a Pastoral Training Program in Your Church,” *The Gospel Coalition* (Jan 2013), accessed July 30, 2014, <http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/tgc/2013/01/02/how-to-start-a-pastoral-training-program-in-your-church/>.

Purpose of the Study

This study is part of a larger project in Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary's Doctor of Ministry program that is designed to find effective ways to teach homiletics. Pastors, all who have had at least five years of preaching experience, concentrated for three years on this subject. Each invested two hundred and forty hours in class and read a wide variety of literature in homiletics, communications, and education. They also conducted research projects in their churches that were designed to determine what constitutes effective preaching. They met for three, two-week seminars for intensive classroom lectures and discussions focused on preaching. The broad purpose of these seminars was to prepare a band of teachers who could help others communicate the Scriptures effectively to their generation.

The purpose of this study is to create an introductory course in preaching for young men who have completed their university studies, who are participating in a one-year residency program at Grace Church in Greenville, South Carolina, and who are considering positions in church leadership.

Context of the Study

The context for this thesis is Grace Church in Greenville, SC. Grace is a protestant, non-denominational, evangelical church that has been established for almost twenty years. Grace is a multi-site church where over 7,000 gather on a weekly basis for weekend worship.

The Mission of Grace Church

The *mission* of the church states that *Grace Church exists to make mature followers of Jesus Christ by equipping them for a life of spiritual passion that impacts their home, the community, and the world for Jesus Christ.* The following paragraphs further explain each section of this mission statement.

Grace Church Exists to Make Mature Followers of Jesus Christ...

Christ's mandate to his followers is clear—make disciples. A disciple is simply a mature follower. Often, the Christian growth process is stunted after belief in Christ. At Grace, we want to see that process continued. The motif we see in the Gospels is this: Jesus does all the work, the disciples watch; Jesus does most of the work, the disciples help; the disciples do most of the work, Jesus helps; the disciples do all of the work, Jesus watches; and ultimately we continue in that work until Jesus returns. We want to recreate this leadership process at Grace. The marks of a mature follower are:

1. They can study their Bible personally and are able to implement its principles practically into their lives.
2. They develop relationships of encouragement and accountability with other believers.
3. They use their gifts and abilities to serve others.
4. They are actively involved in leading others to Christ and leading others in a growing relationship with Christ.
5. They pursue an intimate and dependent relationship with God.

... By Equipping Them...

Ephesians 4:11-12 states, "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ."

Equipping takes place in a variety of forms at Grace. The Sunday morning worship service is structured to equip believers through Scripture, as are small groups. Our men's and women's ministries focus on training members how to fulfill each gender's specific God-given role. Other ministries, such as Grace Institute, provide people the opportunity to be equipped in specialized areas of doctrine, ministry, or in life skills, such as parenting, intimacy within marriage, and finances.

As Christians, we are all called to become ministers of the gospel. As a church, Grace functions to equip each member to be an effective representative of Jesus Christ and his truth. Our members are the true ministers of this church. Our desire is not to create an environment where our members sit and watch the staff, elders, and deacons do all of the ministering. Rather, we want our leadership to develop our members and provide the resources necessary to become effective ministers.

...For a Life of Spiritual Passion That Impacts...

The process of spiritual maturity is not an end in itself. As Christians, we grow and learn so that we may model Christ's love to the world. The Christian life is not to be lived in a defensive mindset. Grace Church believes nothing is more exciting than lives

being given away to the greatest cause there is. We want our members to be passionate about their relationship with Christ, a desire that overflows out of them.

...Their Homes...

We want our members to begin their impact for Christ in the home. We desire for our member's homes to be marked by husbands who love their wives as Christ loves the church, wives who submit to their husbands as unto Christ, and parents committed to raising their children as image bearers of Christ.

...The Community...

We believe that the call of the local church, and Christians as individuals, is not to withdraw from the world, but to penetrate it and impact it for Jesus Christ. The purpose of Grace Church is not to be a fortress in Greenville, where people come and hide behind our walls. The goal is to see its members influencing their neighborhoods, workplaces, PTA's, little leagues, and wherever else they find themselves.

...And the World for Jesus Christ.

Christ's command before he ascended to Heaven was to be his witnesses "in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and even the remotest part of the earth."⁵ As a church, we are called to advance the gospel to the world. Our expectation is that as a church body

⁵ Acts 1:8.

and as individuals, we would be involved with the advancement of the gospel around the world, whether by financially and prayerfully supporting foreign missionaries or by going ourselves.

Vision

The *vision* of Grace Church is to *equip*, *extend*, and *entrust*. The following paragraphs further explain each aspect of this vision.

Equip

In Ephesians 4:12, Paul tells us that church leaders are called, “To equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church.” The Greek word translated in this context as *equip* is also used in the Gospels to describe fishermen mending broken nets. At Grace, we seek to mend lives and equip people for lives of spiritual passion. This passion fuels people to continuously give away their lives for the sake of God’s glory.

Extend

Our vision for extending our influence comes from Matthew 28:19-20. In this passage, Christ tells his disciples to go and make disciples of all nations. Christ clearly calls us to move out of places of comfort and to take the hope and message of Jesus to our communities. This is done by reaching out materially to those in need and by freely sharing the life change the gospel has brought about in us. As church, we regularly ask

ourselves two questions: If Jesus lived in Greenville, where would he be and what would he be doing? And, if Grace Church disappeared, who would miss us?

Entrust

We believe everything we have belongs to God, and we are just stewards—or managers—of the money and resources he has given us. The world tends to view resources with scarcity and fear, but Grace strives to become a culture of people who follow Jesus and view resources through the lens of faith and generosity. Instead of hoarding and wasting money on ourselves, we want to learn how to leverage those resources to expand God’s influence.

The Proposed Solution to the Problem of this Study

The leadership at Grace Church is taking three significant steps to answer the problem of training the next generation of church leaders in our local context. The first step is to create a learning environment called “Cultor House,” derived from the Latin word *cultus* or *cultor* meaning: “An inhabitant or dweller who is cultivated so that they might in turn cultivate others.” Cultor House is a one-year residential learning community geared toward young men and women who desire to mature in their faith, grow in their ministry capacity, and gain insight into their calling. Through Cultor House, interns will have the following experiences:

1. They will meet in classes three times a week to engage with a curriculum that consists of discipleship classes in Bible, theology, leadership, femininity, masculinity, and the basics of ministry.
2. They will serve in different ministries at Grace Church for twenty-plus hours per week.
3. They will work a part-time job in the local community.
4. They will be mentored by various pastors, staff, and elders.
5. They will work closely with pastors, staff, elders, key leaders, and other interns to better understand and develop their gifts.

One of the goals of this experience is to provide an opportunity for several interns to become residents after their initial nine-months of Cultor House. Residents are not pastors; they are paid staff with a one year, full-time contract. During the resident year, they will continue to be mentored and taught on a more intense level. If God so leads, after that year, they will become staff members, or eventually pastors. Some of these residents may not become full-time pastors at Grace Church, but instead find their way to other churches, become lay members, small group leaders, elders, or deacons.

The second step is an introductory class in preaching. Residents will understand the task of preparing and delivering sermons on an introductory level from theological, philosophical, and practical perspectives. The requirements for students in this class include the following:

1. Students will identify preaching that is biblically based, gospel-oriented and Christ-centered with the intention of transforming the listener.
2. They will prepare, construct, and deliver sermons that include a big idea, an introduction, the body, multiple applications, varied illustrations, and effective conclusions.
3. They will complete written evaluations that demonstrate the ability to critically, but constructively, evaluate preaching in print and oral form.

The third step in fulfilling the responsibility to develop leaders lies in the way in which Grace Church is structured. The church is designed in specific ways to provide opportunities for residents to develop their gifts and skills in preaching. First, Grace Church is a multi-site church with five campuses. In most multi-site churches, video teaching from one primary preacher is the norm. This primary preacher speaks the vast majority of the time, akin to a solo pastor in a small congregation who has no other staff with whom to share this preaching responsibility. Grace Church differs from this model because the teaching pastor preaches approximately half of the weekends each year. Grace has another teaching pastor who does a smaller percentage of the teaching, and then other campus pastors, elders, and other pastors preach as needed. At times, the preaching is done via video. At other times, it is live on the different campuses. Therefore, more opportunities are available for residents to preach because one speaker doesn't dominate our teaching schedule.

A second benefit of the multi-site structure is that it provides residents with an increased number of opportunities throughout the year to preach. Third, because of

the size of Grace Church, preaching opportunities are not limited to the Sunday morning worship service. Other outlets include student ministry, community retirement homes, and international partnerships with other churches. Fourth, Grace seeks to plant indigenous churches outside our area where a pastor of preaching in residence is needed, further providing opportunities for preaching. Finally, Grace has established a ministry arm of the church entitled Entrust Leader Institute (ELI) that exists to encourage, train, and provide resources for church planters and pastors who have not had seminary training, or who need sharpening in different areas of ministry. One of the ways Grace serves them is by providing pulpit supply from among the staff, which in turn provides even more opportunities for young preachers.

Grace holds the conviction that the best way to reach the community is to be incarnationally present—another way of saying “local.” This belief speaks directly to the “local” training and mentoring of the next generation of pastors. Therefore, we must teach them preaching, and teach them well.

Evaluation of this Study

The evaluation tool used in this course will be the IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction. This tool factors out extraneous circumstances and focuses on student learning with 12 specific objectives. It can be administered online or on paper. IDEA tailors each report to fit the instructor's selected learning objectives and offers recommendations for improvement based on a vast national database. In essence, IDEA builds in objectivity, but leaves the craft of teaching open to interpretation. The Student

Ratings of Instruction system solicits students' feedback on their own learning progress, effort, and motivation, as well as their perceptions of the instructor's use of 20 instructional strategies and teaching methods. In addition, the system surveys instructors regarding their overall goals and highlights them in the analysis and report.

The IDEA Student Ratings system looks at instruction in terms of its endgame. Rather than emphasizing teaching style or personality, the IDEA system focuses on student learning and the methods used to facilitate it. The *Student Ratings of Instruction* system draws upon IDEA's national database. This crucial comparative data provides a firm basis for identifying strengths and diagnosing areas in need of improvement, while factoring out variables beyond the instructor's control, such as student work habits, student motivation, and class size.⁶

⁶ "Student Ratings of Instruction," *IDEA Education*, accessed July 30, 2014, www.ideaedu.org/services/student-ratings/.

CHAPTER 2

THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

Innumerable pages can be, and have been, written on the biblical and theological understanding of preaching. In the context of this thesis, the question is, “What, in terms of preaching, needs to be extrapolated for interns of Cultor House at Grace Church?” The interns of this program are college graduates who profess faith in Christ, and who have gone through an extensive interview process. Still, they do not have a theological education and most have only a rudimentary understanding of Scripture and theology. So, it makes sense that this course covers building blocks in regards to essential topics, such as the Trinity. Interns are taught these topics in a separate class; however, it is important to reinforce topics in the homiletics class to show how they are connected to preaching and teaching. The following topics are discussed:

1. The Primacy of Preaching
2. The Biblical Nature of Preaching
3. Trinitarian Preaching
4. Gospel-Centered Preaching

The Primacy of Preaching

The case for preaching is that it is the primary way through which the Kingdom of God becomes clear in Scripture. A quick search of the words “preach,” “preaching” or “preacher,” reveals that they occur nearly 150 times in some English translations of the Bible. This count does not include Hebrew and Greek derivatives such as “proclaim” or “speak.” Yet, it is not the number of times these words occur that carries the weight of the primacy of preaching argument. The Old Testament states that God came speaking, or proclaiming, the world into existence.¹ He continues to communicate to his people by revealing himself, by teaching them about themselves, and by providing a relationship.² Later, he uses chosen leaders to communicate on his behalf to and for his people.³ This pattern continues throughout the Old Testament, including an entire portion of the Bible that is dedicated to the prophets who spoke on God’s behalf. Without diminishing the pattern-setting role of the Old Testament, a closer look at New Testament texts provides insight as to how preaching is presented as the primary way through which the Kingdom of God perpetuates and expands.

¹ Genesis 1.

² Genesis 2.

³ Deuteronomy 18.

Jesus

In considering the New Testament, it makes the most sense to begin with Jesus. The way in which John's gospel begins, and the specific title he gives to Jesus, is significant for the beginning of this discussion.

John 1:1

"In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Jesus is the very communication and proclamation of God to us. He could have been given any number of titles such as "The Act of God," "The Sign of God," or "The Warrior of God." Instead he is "The Word of God." As God, he became human to reveal and communicate God to us.⁴ A few verses later John states that the revealing of this walking human sermon was successful.⁵

John 1:14

"So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son."

⁴ John 1:18.

⁵ John 1:12, 14b.

Whereas John's gospel identified who Jesus was, Mark's gospel emphasizes what he came to do.⁶ He begins by telling the reader about John the Baptist, who followed the pattern of Old Testament prophets by preaching a message of repentance and baptism because of the nearness of the Kingdom of God.⁷ The *nearness*, of course, was Jesus himself. The suspense builds as the reader wonders what this King—who was coming to usher in the Kingdom—is going to do. Will he take it by violence? Will he politically maneuver the powers that be in order to gather a following to conquer the world? Mark reveals Jesus' actions immediately following Jesus' inauguration into his public ministry through baptism.⁸

Mark 1:14-15

"Later on, after John was arrested, Jesus went into Galilee, where he preached God's Good News. 'The time promised by God has come at last!' he announced. 'The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News!'"

Should it surprise anyone that he is communicating, proclaiming, preaching? Of course, this is what he does! Why? Because this is God's nature.⁹ He is one who communicates himself as truth, and in that truth there is life to be found. Therefore,

⁶ Mark 1:35-39; 10:45.

⁷ John 1:22-23.

⁸ Mark 1:14-15.

⁹ Genesis 1-3; Psalm 19:1-6; Romans 1: 18-21.

Jesus *is* the communication of God, and he comes communicating truth. In doing so, he continues in the pattern that preaching is primary and elevates its importance.

The Church

Mark introduced Jesus in the beginning as one who came preaching.¹⁰ That pattern continued throughout his lifetime, and in the end, when it was time for him to ascend to his Father, he ensured that the preaching of truth continued by passing the baton to his followers.¹¹

Mark 16:15-16

“And then he told them, “Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone. Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe will be condemned.”

The means through which people will believe, be baptized, and saved is by hearing and receiving the Good News preached by Jesus’ followers. So, the question becomes whether this commission of preaching is obeyed. In Acts, this question immediately finds an answer. After Peter receives the Holy Spirit in chapter 2, he stands up to preach the Good News to everyone present.¹² What were the results?

¹⁰ Mark 1:14-15.

¹¹ Mark 16:15-16.

¹² Acts 2:14.

Acts 2:41

“Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.”

After this momentous event, Peter and John go to the temple one afternoon and encounter a man lame from birth lying beside the gate.¹³ When the man sees them, he asks for money, but instead, they heal his lifelong affliction. As soon as the people see this man—well-known as a cripple because of where he sat begging—they are astounded. They begin to crowd around Peter and John, undoubtedly thinking they would get some sort of miraculous benefit from them, which they could have done. Peter and John could have taken the opportunity to wow the crowd right there in the temple. But Peter chooses differently.¹⁴

Acts 3:12

“Peter saw his opportunity and addressed the crowd... He corrects their misunderstanding of what was happening, drew their attention away from the miracle to the message of hope.”

¹³ Acts 3:1-11.

¹⁴ Acts 3:12.

Acts 3:26

“When God raised up his servant, Jesus, he sent him first to you people of Israel, to bless you by turning each of you back from your sinful ways.

And what were the results of Peter’s preaching?

Acts 4:4

“But many of the people who heard their message believed it, so the number of believers now totaled about 5,000 men, not counting women and children.”

If the focus had remained on the act of healing, the results may have been minimal. One life would have been changed, and perhaps, a limited number of others. One must also consider that the Kingdom is about the Good News of eternal hope, and not physical well-being.¹⁵ That is why it is so significant that Peter seizes this moment and begins preaching. As a result, thousands more believe and come to faith.¹⁶

The emphasis on preaching continues in chapter 4.¹⁷ Peter and John are confronted, arrested, and later questioned by the priests, the captain of the temple guard, and the Sadducees.¹⁸ They want to know by what authority, and in whose name, Peter and John had performed this miracle.¹⁹ Actually, it was not so much the miracle

¹⁵ Acts 3:19-20.

¹⁶ Acts 4:4.

¹⁷ Acts 4:1.

¹⁸ Acts 4:1.

¹⁹ Acts 4:5-7.

that troubled them as the fact that thousands of people were following their teaching.²⁰

Peter, who now seems to be quickly catching on, seizes another opportunity. What does he do? Does he ask them if they would like to see another miracle to prove the first was not a hoax or a one-time event, or does he do something that legitimizes their message? No, he continues the pattern established by Jesus. Being filled with the Holy Spirit, he preaches to the council.²¹

However, this scene in chapter 4 is not yet complete. The council convenes behind closed doors to discuss what action to take.²² They could not deny the miracle because the lame man had been present during the proceedings as evidence.²³ They weighed their options considering which was more devastating: John and Peter's healing, or their preaching. The obvious answer being the later, they made a ruling.²⁴

Acts 4:17-18

"But to keep them from spreading their propaganda any further, we must warn them not to speak to anyone in Jesus' name again." So they called the apostles back in and commanded them never again to speak or teach in the name of Jesus."

²⁰ Acts 4:7; the nature of their inquiry was about the preaching not healing.

²¹ Acts 4:8-12.

²² Acts 4:15.

²³ Acts 4:16.

²⁴ Acts 4:17-18.

An interesting aspect to note is that the council does not order a cease and desist on healing. The injunction was never to speak or teach in Jesus's name. Why? Because preaching is the primary avenue God has chosen to use for the continuation and expansion of his kingdom.²⁵ His followers, and even those opposed to him, recognize this. How do Peter and John respond?

Acts 4:19-20

"But Peter and John replied, "Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than him? We cannot stop telling about everything we have seen and heard."

After they are released, they rejoin the other believers and pray for great boldness to continue faithfully carrying out the mission through preaching. God hears their prayer and they continue to preach boldly.²⁶

As significant as the scene in chapter 4 is, there is another event that happens not long after that takes the primacy of preaching in the early church to another level. Chapter 6 states that the believers are multiplying rapidly, so rapidly that they are unable to keep up with the basic needs of caring for them.²⁷ Christianity approaches epidemic proportions and there is no infrastructure to support the growth. Naturally, discontent enters between different groups. In this case, the groups are lodging

²⁵ Acts 4:19-20.

²⁶ Acts 4:31.

²⁷ Acts 6:1.

complaints against the Apostles that the daily distribution of food for widows is being handled with partiality.²⁸ The Apostles do not respond defensively by rebuking the complainers or by explaining the method for food distribution. Instead, they make a statement that at first seems to be insensitive.²⁹

Acts 6:2

“So the Twelve called a meeting of all the believers. They said, “We apostles should spend our time teaching the word of God, not running a food program.”

This does not mean that the Apostles are calling a food program for widows unimportant, especially considering the desperate situation widows were often in. They are fully aware of the urgent life and death nature of this responsibility. A careful reading reveals that they are simply making a judgment call on roles and responsibilities.³⁰ Practically, they could not do everything well and so they focus on their primary responsibility—to pray and preach. They are convinced that preaching is primary in extending the Kingdom of God. Are they correct? It seems they are.

²⁸ Acts 6:1.

²⁹ Acts 2:2-4.

³⁰ Acts 6:5-6.

Acts 6:7

“So God’s message continued to spread. The number of believers greatly increased in Jerusalem, and many of the Jewish priests were converted, too.”

The second half of chapter 6 and the entirety of chapter 7 bring about a shift in the story of the early church. Stephen, a man full of the Spirit, is preaching and it becomes unbearable to those unresponsive to the gospel.³¹ The authorities bring him in for questioning and he cannot help himself, he turns his own defense into a sermon.³² Subsequently, he is stoned to death, inciting the widespread persecution of other Christians.³³ Chapter 8 states that in order to avoid succumbing to persecution focused in Jerusalem, believers are scattered throughout the region.³⁴ One would think that “scattering” insinuates that people went into hiding. Not so. As a matter of fact, the opposite is true.

Acts 8:4

“But the believers who were scattered preached the Good News about Jesus wherever they went.”

³¹ Acts 6:8-15.

³² Acts 7.

³³ Acts 8:1-4.

³⁴ Acts 8:1.

In this case, persecution, as dramatic as it is, serves the purpose of providing opportunities to preach.³⁵ And preach is exactly what they do. Example after example of preaching and conversions follows.³⁶ From individuals to families, from villages to towns, from cities to regions—all by means of the preached Word. The question of whether the book of Acts is to be interpreted primarily as *descriptive* or *prescriptive* seems to be a moot point regarding the primacy of preaching.³⁷ No other alternatives to preaching are suggested. The end result is the spread of Christianity around the world. Therefore, preaching is primary.

Paul

If the example and commission of Jesus, as well as the evidence of the early church, are not enough to convince one of the primacy of preaching, other texts in the letters of Paul reinforce this premise. His letter to the Romans, as majestic as it is, is not enough for Paul. His inner gears are grinding away wanting more.

Romans 1:15

“So I am eager to come to you in Rome, too, to preach the Good News.”

³⁵ Acts 8:4.

³⁶ Acts 8:4-40; 9:32-35, 42.

³⁷ Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids, eds., *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Development* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1997), 7-24.

Mysteriously, there is a power in the preaching of the Good News that is different even than the written Word.³⁸ This is not to say that the written Word is inferior in any way to the spoken Word. The written Word is inspired by God and is the source of all preaching,³⁹ but there is a dynamic that happens in preaching that Paul knew existed and felt was necessary.⁴⁰

In his letter to the Thessalonians, he recalls their conversion story.⁴¹ It was not a letter that converted them, nor was it a polite discussion ending with an “agree to disagree” peace treaty. It was the preached Word of God that transformed them.⁴²

1 Thessalonians 2:13

“Therefore, we never stop thanking God that when you received his message from us, you didn’t think of our words as mere human ideas. You accepted what we said as the very word of God—which, of course, it is. And this word continues to work in you who believe.”

In one of his more emotive texts on his calling, Paul writes to the church at Colossae about the nature and place that preaching holds.⁴³

³⁸ 1 Thessalonians 2:13.

³⁹ 2 Timothy 4:1-2.

⁴⁰ 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Romans 10:17.

⁴¹ 1 Thessalonians 2:1-16.

⁴² 1 Thessalonians 2:12-14.

⁴³ Colossians 1:25-29.

Colossians 1:25-29

“I am glad when I suffer for you in my body, for I am participating in the sufferings of Christ that continue for his body, the church. God has given me the responsibility of serving his church by proclaiming his entire message to you. This message was kept secret for centuries and generations past, but now it has been revealed to God’s people. For God wanted them to know that the riches and glory of Christ are for you Gentiles, too. And this is the secret: Christ lives in you. This gives you assurance of sharing his glory.”

Suffering by definition is something to be avoided.⁴⁴ But for Paul to be glad and to celebrate his suffering is counterintuitive and can be considered sadistic. Unless, that is, it is for a greater purpose. He gladly suffers on behalf of the church because she is his greater purpose.⁴⁵ How does he serve? By preaching the entire message of Christ to them.⁴⁶ Their lives depend on his delivering them the Good News so that the benefits won by Christ on their behalf are available to them.⁴⁷ The unchangeable truth is that Christ is alive in them and yet they are desperate to hear and know that truth. And how could they know unless they are told? He extrapolates this need in Romans.

⁴⁴ Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, and Tremper Longman III, *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1998), 824-826.

⁴⁵ Ephesians 3:1-13.

⁴⁶ Colossians 1:25.

⁴⁷ Colossians 1:26-27.

Romans 10:14

“But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?”

The New International Version says, “How can they hear without someone preaching to them?” The answer, of course, is they cannot. Preaching is absolutely necessary link in the communication chain of truth, and—according to Paul—it’s worth all the suffering in the world.⁴⁸

Though there are many other passages of Paul’s that could be addressed, there is one final text that is the final word to his friend.⁴⁹ Paul again finds himself imprisoned, but this time is different. Whereas before he was under house arrest, being treated humanely, he is now in a dungeon in chains where his friends have had difficulty finding him.⁵⁰ It is in this setting that he writes his final letter, 2 Timothy, to his son in the faith. He tells Timothy that this is likely the end for him.⁵¹ He is on the home stretch of his life race and has thoughts to leave with one he loves.⁵²

⁴⁸ Romans 10:14.

⁴⁹ 2Timothy 4:1-2.

⁵⁰ 2Timothy 1:15-18.

⁵¹ 2 Timothy 4:6-8.

⁵² 2Timothy 4:6-8.

2 Timothy 4:1-2

“I solemnly urge you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who will someday judge the living and the dead when he comes to set up his Kingdom: Preach the word of God. Be prepared, whether the time is favorable or not. Patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with good teaching.”

Final words are always poignant, and he charges Timothy to continue to do the very thing that has convicted Paul of a death sentence. Why? Because preaching is primary, and in the end, when we stand in the presence of our Savior, those who have been called will give an account of our faithfulness—or lack thereof—in preaching.⁵³

The Biblical Nature of Preaching

The Bible demonstrates the necessity of preaching. Now, it should be understood that preaching must be based *upon* the Bible. As noted above, 2 Timothy is a poignant letter due to the nature of it being considered a “last letter.” It has much to say in regards to the biblical nature of preaching, and we will make a few observations in that regard.

⁵³ 2Timothy 4:1-2.

The Origin and Uniqueness of Preaching

The following three words from one verse have massive implications.

2 Timothy 4:2

“Preach the word...”

The content from which preaching originates is not up for debate. It is clear that the spoken word originates from the written Word. This means preachers do not have to search the world over for another source of ideas from which to draw upon. The Word is sufficient. William Perkins wrote the first book of the English Reformation in 1617 and aptly says, “The Word of God alone is to be preached, in its perfection and inner consistency. Scripture is the exclusive subject of preaching, the only field in which the preacher is to labour.”⁵⁴ This does not mean preachers do not work to understand human nature or the world in which they live, but even understanding that world rightly comes from Scripture.⁵⁵ It is the true original source, and thereby, makes this type of discourse unique. While various homileticians claim differences in what exegetical preaching must be,⁵⁶ if the origin of their preaching is the Bible, then they stand under the banner of Paul’s inspired charge to Timothy.

⁵⁴ William Perkins. *The Art of Prophesying* (Edinburgh, UK: The Banner of Truth, 1996), 9.

⁵⁵ As humans, we are dependent on an authority outside of ourselves to teach us about who we are. This comes from the one who made us, defined and then informs us what we are like as in Genesis 1:27.

⁵⁶ Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: 2001), 21.

The Authority of Preaching

Finding the origin and uniqueness of preaching in the Bible is not about having something to say that can be considered interesting. The reason we speak is because Scripture carries authority. Paul encourages Timothy in his letter.

2 Timothy 3:16

“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true...”

Inspired means that it is uniquely “God-breathed.” This characteristic alone validates the Bible’s authoritative place in preaching:

The idea is not so much that God breathed into the Scriptures, but that the Scriptures are the product of His breathing out. Independent of what we may feel regarding the Bible as we read it, Scripture maintains a “breath of God” quality. The preacher is to make it understandable. He is to limit himself to it without adding or subtracting.⁵⁷

As listeners, this requires a posture to sit under the authority of God as given to us in his Word, which then requires preaching to find its sole authority in the Word as well. Then, and only then, will preaching become what it is intended to be because it contains derivative authority. Haddon Robinson notes in the foreword to the British edition of his book, “An expository ministry is the proper response to a God-breathed Scripture....Central to it all is the concern which the word ‘exposition’ itself enshrines: a display of what is there.”⁵⁸ It is an error to think that God may have inspired Scripture,

⁵⁷ Albert R. Mohler and Don Kistler, *Feed My sheep: A Passionate Plea for Preaching* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 2002), 63.

⁵⁸ Haddon Robinson, *Expository Preaching: Principles and Practice* (Leicester, UK: IVP, 1980), vi.

but just as breath lasts only a moment when exhaled, so his breath in Scripture has ceased. But therein lies the uniqueness of the Bible. It was God-breathed when written, and because the Spirit accompanies it, it continues to breath out truth to all who will hear. God continues to speak through his Word. This is the only assurance preaching has of being authoritative.

The Responsibility of Preaching

Because the Bible is inspired, it requires hard work that is responsible.

2 Timothy 2:15

“Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth.”

“Explaining the truth” carries with it the idea of cutting or dividing correctly.

Two images emerge from this language. One is of a chef cutting food into edible portions so that they can be eaten, providing nourishment and energy to all in need. A second image is that of one leading others through a forest full of lush greenery, yet unable to find their way unless someone cuts a path providing a way for them to travel. This is the responsibility of the preacher. Nothing demands more dedicated work and responsible handling than the truth that transforms lives because it is God-breathed.

The Product of Preaching

Responsible preaching finds its origin, uniqueness, and authority from the Bible and is product-oriented. Paul emphasized this to Timothy.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.”

How do people know what is right and to correct themselves when wrong? The Scripture. How do they know what the Scripture teaches? Through those who correctly explain it. Then they will be equipped for every good work. Progress in construction is obvious. Cleanliness of a mirror is evident. But transformed lives as a direct result of preaching can be difficult to measure. This does not make it any less true, nor does it make it any less product-oriented. The goal of preaching is to produce believers who are fully mature and equipped to do every good work. In this way, preaching becomes biblical in nature.

Trinitarian Preaching

In a recent article in *Preaching* magazine, Michael J. Quicke, professor of preaching and communication at Northern Seminary, makes a startling observation:

When Bishop Lesslie Newbigin returned from missionary service in India, he observed that when the average Christian in Britain hears the name of God, he or she does not think of the Trinity and, in consequence, much worship in the

West is in practice, if not in theory, unitarian. Others have commented about Christianity's "mere monotheism" and the "forgotten Father."

Sadly, within that large part of the evangelical church that is non-liturgical, (meaning that it does not use historic patterns of worship), and non-creedal (not regularly reciting creeds), mention of the Trinity appears increasingly rare. Spared even having to mark Trinity Sunday, much worship seldom makes reference to the Father and the Holy Spirit as part of the triune Godhead. Jesus is not depended upon as the Mediator and Intercessor with the Father by the Spirit, and the Holy Spirit has become the "missing Person" of the Trinity. We are witnessing the incredible shrinking God.⁵⁹

There are a couple of reasons that may contribute to this being the state of the church in the U.S. First, it is possible for preachers to be theologically uninformed. That is not to say that preaching should be a theological lecture, but if the Scripture does anything, it reveals who God is. So, if the sermon does anything, it must give others God. Second, some preachers may ask as a primary question, "How can I make my hearer's life better today?" Often, the answer to this question is simply helping them to create and achieve a life they perceive to be "their best."

Quicke offers a model he refers to as "360-degree preaching" that counters this slide. For our purposes, I want to highlight only the Trinitarian nature of this model. He introduces it by saying, "It [the act of preaching] involves movement through 360 degrees of eventfulness as God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—speaks through his Word and empowers the preacher and convicts the listener and transforms the lives of the preacher and the listeners."⁶⁰ He follows this up with this summary:

⁵⁹ Michael J. Quicke, "Thinking as Trinitarians," *Preaching Magazine*, accessed July 30, 2014, <http://www.preaching.com/resources/articles/11555256/>.

⁶⁰ Michael J. Quicke, *360-degree Preaching: Hearing, Speaking, and Living the Word* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003), 49.

No genuine encounter with God in preaching can occur except through gracious revelation of Father; Christ's interceding presence, and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, who enabled Scripture to be inspired and now enables it to be interpreted, shared, and lived out in faith. Preaching is a Father event, a Christ event, and a Spirit event, or else it is merely resounding gongs or clanging symbols.⁶¹

This is not to give a full theology of the Trinity, but the question remains: how do we preach as Trinitarians? Before looking directly at the three Persons of the Trinity, it would be helpful to make two points in regard to Trinitarian methodology. First, it is important to keep together *perichoresis*,⁶² which is the truth that the Persons of the Trinity cannot be separated from the other, and *proprium*,⁶³ which are the appropriations—or acts—carried out by each Person of the Trinity. Each Person carries out different roles and responsibilities, but that does not mean they are separate or disconnected.

Second, a helpful framework for understanding the Trinity is by John Frame in *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*.⁶⁴ Frame develops a tri-perspectival approach to the knowledge of the Trinity. Because the Son and the Spirit are “in and with” the Father, when we explore the Father deeply enough we will learn about the Son and the Spirit. Yet, focusing on the Father teaches about the Godhead that only he can show. Another way of saying this is that you can learn about the Godhead through the “door”

⁶¹ Quicke, *360-degree Preaching*, 50.

⁶² John 10:38; 14:8-11.

⁶³ Ephesians 1:3-14.

⁶⁴ John Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1987).

of the Father that will eventually and unmistakably lead you to the Son and the Spirit. The same can be said of the Son or the Spirit being the “door” to understanding the Godhead. God not only offers these perspectives, but because he is incomprehensible—that is, not fully comprehensible—and we are finite, he also requires us to approach him in such a way in order to truly understand him. This is an important key to our understanding him.

God the Father

The Father originates all things by speaking his Word in creation and self-revelation. This is a primary intention of the account given to us in Genesis 1-2. The repetition of “God said...and it was so.” reveals his nature. He is the one who speaks a word that creates something out of nothing. When he speaks, it is not in the hopes that someone will hear and perhaps listen. His speech is an event in itself. Often, when the Father is preached in this way, it can be left to what he has *said* or how he *acted* in the past. A speech event brings those words and actions into the present, collapsing time past with time present. It is a “with God” moment where his power is experienced because the preaching is done *with* his power. The Father initiates and we respond, and therefore, cannot be ignored. In his book, *The Supremacy of God in Preaching*, John Piper outlines his book in a Trinitarian fashion, but first emphasizes that the goal of preaching is the glory of God the Father.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ John Piper, *The Supremacy of God in Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1990), 23.

God the Son

The Father spoke the world into existence *by* the Son. The Son is the word-event. Though not mentioned in the Genesis account, Paul emphasizes this in Colossians.

Colossians 1:15-16

“Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can’t see— such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him.”

The Son is the eternally spoken Word from God the Father, as noted earlier from John 1. Therefore Jesus is the living word-event in human flesh. Often, when Christ is preached, we focus on his past action, but he is not there. He is presently working and continually mediating as one seated at the right hand of God the Father. So when we preach the *word of God*, the Bible, we are preaching the *Word of God*, the Son, because the written word points to the living Word.

At this point, the topic of Christ-centered preaching must be addressed. It has become such a discussion that it could demand its own extended section. There are good models, fair models, and some not very helpful models that would identify them as part of this group. While this is not the place for an extended evaluation of Christ-centered models, preaching that lifts up Jesus by making him an example to follow is not

one of the healthier models.⁶⁶ An example of a fair model is one in which the preacher takes an extended amount of time from every single text encountered to engage in rigorous theological examination without showing contemporary relevance or how God transforms life.⁶⁷ The following are suggested as two examples of a good model.

The first is presented in the thorough work *Christ-Centered Preaching* by Bryan Chapell.⁶⁸ Summarizing a model that is somewhat complex often does more damage than good, but it is helpful to get an idea of the emphasis of the model. Chapell's emphasis is interested in a healthy redemptive-historical method through the study of each text:

1. Identify the fallen condition focus in the text.
2. Decipher the redemptive signal in the text.
3. Expound the redemptive message of the text—Christ has accomplished the work for us.
4. Apply truths.

Poor applications of this model show how Christ has won the battle for us and we respond in gratitude, rather than compelling us to the challenging work of obedience. However, this model is helpful in keeping us focused upon redemption as the central theme of the Bible.

⁶⁶ Timothy Keller, "Preaching to the Heart" (lecture series delivered at Ockenga Institute of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, Massachusetts, 2006) gives a good summary of models.

⁶⁷ Keller, "Preaching to the Heart."

⁶⁸ Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008).

Second, a helpful Christ-centered model is *Preaching the Gospel in a Post Modern World*, a class taught by Edmund P. Clowney and Timothy J. Keller at Reformed Theological Seminary's Doctor of Ministry Program in January of 2001. Portions of this have been produced in other volumes and recordings, such as when Keller delivered a lecture series entitled *Preaching to the Heart* at the Ockenga Institute at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in 2006. They introduce their model this way:

In this course we will be offering a model for preaching that can be called by several names and titles- all of which we will be using as synonyms. It is *Christo-centric* preaching because it calls us to "preach Christ" and his salvation from every passage of the Bible. It is *Gospel-centered* preaching because it never moves 'beyond' the finished work of Christ to supposedly more 'advanced' Biblical principles. It expounds the gospel as the central way to address any issue for both Christians and non-Christians. It is *Redemptive-Historical* preaching because it is based on a way of reading the Bible that stresses the organic unity between unfolding historical stages of God's redemption in Christ.⁶⁹

So how do they get to Christ? They give three aspects, or perspectives, of preaching:

1. Prophetic or Normative Aspect: to expound and teach the text so Christ is understood.
2. Kingly or Situational Aspect: to apply and counsel with the text so Christ is put on.
3. Priestly or Existential Aspect: to adore and worship with the text so Christ is rejoiced in.

⁶⁹ Edmund P. Clowney and Timothy Keller, "Preaching the Gospel in a Post Modern World" (lecture series at Reformed Theological Seminary's Doctor of Ministry Program, January, 2000), 3.

One of the major challenges of this model is finding Christ in each text without doing injustice to it by reading something into it that does not exist. Because this takes so much work, poor applications of this model simply find Christ in every text and end there. However, to find Christ as the fulfillment of God's redemptive plan and hope is compelling.

God the Holy Spirit

The Spirit was a part of creating, as clearly addressed in Genesis.

Genesis 1:2

"The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters."

The creative word the Father spoke by the Son was empowered by the Spirit. In the same way, the Spirit causes the preached word to be heard and understood. The preacher is empowered to proclaim, and the hearers are empowered to live out, the life of God. A response is called to Christ, but also with the Holy Spirit who is actively engaging his people. We are called to be open to the experience of the Holy Spirit. In his helpful book *Spirit-Led Preaching*, Greg Heisler says, "I do not believe the reformation of Christian preaching, specifically expository preaching, is complete. In

addition to a strong emphasis on the text of Scripture, we must place an equally strong emphasis on the Holy Spirit who empowers us to preach the Scriptures.”⁷⁰ He continues,

The recovery of the Holy Spirit’s role in expository preaching will enrich and empower our preaching and our churches. Not only will students and practitioners of preaching understand the mechanics of the text, but they will also be conversant and experienced in the dynamics of the Spirit. Instead of only hearing, ‘The text, the text, the text,’ in their homiletic classrooms, they will start hearing, ‘The text and the Spirit of God.’⁷¹

He later gives Ten Ways the Holy Spirit Is at Work in Preaching:⁷²

1. The Spirit’s inspiration of the biblical text.
2. The conversion of the preacher to faith in Jesus Christ.
3. The call of the preacher to preach the Word.
4. The character of the preacher to live the Word.
5. The illumination of the preacher’s heart and mind in study.
6. The empowerment of the preacher in proclamation.
7. The testimony of Jesus Christ as Lord and mediator.
8. The opening of the hearts of those who hear and receive the Word.
9. The application of the Word of God to the listeners’ lives.
10. The production of lasting fruit displayed in the lives of the Spirit-filled believers.

⁷⁰ Greg Heisler. *Spirit-Led Preaching: The Holy Spirit's Role in Sermon Preparation and Delivery* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 2007), xv.

⁷¹ Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching*, xvi.

⁷² Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching*, 4.

Looking at a brief list like this make one wonder how we could ever ignore or under-involve the Spirit!

The theological development of the Trinity is not intended to complicate our understanding of the Bible or of preaching. Rather, it is to explain the Bible and give us a more adequate model of preaching. He is one God, three persons, and co-equal in glory. So, how do we remain faithful to the Trinity in our preaching? Again, Quicke has some helpful suggestions and I have added others.⁷³

Preach the Trinity in the Whole Story of Scripture

The Bible is the revelation of God, and he is the central character. We see all three Persons of the Trinity involved in creation, as they are in the cross, and will be in the end. So it stands to reason that we would preach the Trinity as the centerpiece of the metanarrative of Scripture—creation, fall, redemption, and consummation. In seeing this overarching theme of the Bible, some emphasize the mission as the hinge that connects the whole. But who established, continues, and will culminate the mission in his return, as seen in the Great Commission of Matthew 28? The Triune God. Therefore, we should become more biblical by emphasizing him as the center of all things.

⁷³ Michael J. Quicke, "Preaching and Trinitarian Worship: Parts 3 and 4" *Preaching Magazine*, accessed July 30, 2014, <http://www.preaching.com/resources/articles/11557520/>; <http://www.preaching.com/resources/articles/11562921/> (accessed July 30, 2014).

Preach All Three Persons

In broad evangelical circles, the emphasis is without question on Jesus. In charismatic groups the emphasis is the Spirit, with many of them tending toward modalism. There is no group that overemphasizes the Father. This concept led Thomas A. Smail to pen the book *The Forgotten Father*.⁷⁴ Why do we ignore Him as if the bulk of his work has already been accomplished? Why do we see him as the silent mover behind the scenes while the Son and the Spirit are in the forefront visibly active?

Many subgroups not only tend to emphasize one member of the Trinity and allow the Father to take the back seat, we also de-emphasize the third alternate member. The way we de-emphasize them is not by somehow making them less than God, but by not talking about them enough. This will damage us spiritually.

One of the keys to solving this issue is the tri-perspectival approach to understanding the Trinity developed by John Frame as noted earlier. When we preach one person of the Trinity well, we will inevitably get to the other persons because they are “in and with” each other. Thinking and preaching this way opens up a whole new horizon of theocentric preaching that may not be considered by many preachers. For example, consider the following text.

⁷⁴ Thomas A. Smail, *The Forgotten Father* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2000).

John 14:26

“But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.”

We can focus on the Spirit’s work of bringing to mind the Scripture and illuminating our understanding. But what is he illuminating? The words Jesus gave us. Jesus is the living Word. Whose Word is Jesus? The Father’s—who sent Jesus to carry out the plan of redemption. On and on we could go. While this text is more explicitly Trinitarian, this could be done in any number of other texts as we learn about who God is through the “door” of one Person of the Trinity.

Preach the Trinity in Scripture Texts

Though the word “Trinity” is absent from the Scriptural text, we know that it permeates it. Hints of it exist from Genesis 1:26, where God says, “Let us make man in our image,” to Jesus’ annunciation in Luke 1, from his baptism in Luke 3 to the theological delineation of John’s gospel in chapters 10 and 14, and the Pauline benedictions as seen in 2 Corinthians 13:14. We see explicit and implicit Trinitarian references everywhere.

When we encounter these texts, it often feels expedient not to address the Trinity because we have other themes we are emphasizing. The Trinity is mysterious and difficult to grasp. For example, when we hear the most familiar text of the Bible found in John 3:16, we likely never hear it as Trinitarian. Yet, in it, we find the Father gives us the Son who has accomplished victory for us, and the Spirit births us anew. We cannot

and must not circumvent any Persons of the Trinity from any text for any reason. When they are explicitly addressed, we must spend our limited and valuable time identifying them. When they are implicit, we must be careful not to say more than the text; yet, not ignore them. These texts provide opportunities to do theological work with our people by connecting them to other theologically rich texts. Over years of doing this, we will have constructed a healthy foundation for our people.

Preach and Pray with Trinitarian Grammar

It goes without saying that how we speak of God in our preaching intuitively informs and forms our listeners. We do not, or at least should not, simply address God in certain ways out of habit. There is something behind this and we should be careful to use Trinitarian titles as we preach and pray. We refer to him and address him as “Father-Son-Holy Spirit” not out of a desire to impress or be eloquent but because that is who he is, and it will lead our people to do the same.

In summation, John Piper says it well, “God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are the beginning, middle, and end in the ministry of preaching. Written over all ministerial labor; especially preaching, stand the words of the apostle: ‘From him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever.’”⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Piper, *Supremacy of God*, 23.

Gospel-Centered Preaching

The gospel is at the center of everything we do, and so it must be at the center of our preaching. If it is displaced by any other philosophies of transformations, such as self-help techniques, then preaching ceases to be Christian in nature. At that point, it has been cut off at the knees from authority and the possibility of change. That is why we must be thoroughly familiar with the content of the gospel and how it works to transform us.

The Nature of the Gospel ⁷⁶

The nature of the gospel must be clearly understood before it can be properly communicated. In this section we will look at 1 Corinthians 15 and its strong presentation of the nature of the gospel. At the end of each section we identify implications for preaching.

The Gospel is Historical

1 Corinthians 15:1-8

Let me now remind you, dear brothers and sisters, of the Good News I preached to you before. You welcomed it then, and you still stand firm in it. It is this Good News that saves you if you continue to believe the message I told you—unless, of

⁷⁶ This section contains a combination and adaptation of 3 sources: D. A. Carson, "What is the Gospel?" (lecture, The Gospel Coalition Conference, June 2007); Timothy Keller "Gospel Centered Ministry" (lecture, The Gospel Coalition Conference, June 2007); Steve Childers, "The Radical Grace of God in the Gospel: The Whole Gospel for the Whole Person!" *Faithful and Fruitful*, August 2012, accessed July 30, 2014, <http://www.faithfulandfruitful.com/the-radical-grace-of-god-in-the-gospel/>.

course, you believed something that was never true in the first place. I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles. Last of all, as though I had been born at the wrong time, I also saw him.

The gospel is good news, not good advice. *Advice* is counsel about how one should do something that hasn't happened yet. *News* is about something that has already happened. If a king defeats an invading army, he sends back *messengers* (heralds, good-newsmen) who bring a report such as, "Respond with joy and live in peace because the defeat has happened." Every other religion sends military *advisors* which give the equivalent of rites, rituals, or laws so that the people can fight for their lives. One is a response of *joy* while the other is a response of *fear*, trying to keep the regulations and restrictions correctly. The deceiving part is they appear similar, but in reality they are opposites in what they say and what they produce.

1 Corinthians 15 specifies the historical nature of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. All are tied together, and any approach that attempts to pit them against one another is another gospel. The manner in which we access the events of Jesus's death, burial, and resurrection is the same as we have with any historical event—the living witness and writings of those who were present at the events. This is why it is vital for us to know that the witnesses of Scripture are the ones who are passing along the message of the gospel.

The claims of Christianity are irreducibly historical. Unlike most other religions, the historical uniqueness of Christ is a non-negotiable for our faith. The historicity of

Jesus is not only that he existed as a man, but also that the historical claims of his death, burial, and resurrection for our sins truly happened in time and space. This is God's revelation to us. Not that that God gave a deposit of truth to Jesus who then passed it on to us, but that Jesus is the revelation of God to us. He is the Good News.

When 1 Corinthians posits this gospel as true, it is not in some sense "true" because it is meaningful and may accomplish something in us. It is true because these are truths of history. The word "historical" is sometimes used differently depending upon the agenda. One way of interpreting this word is to say that it is only historical if it can be located in natural things. The problem with this definition is that it endeavors to exclude miracles. We know miracles happened because of the historical record of the Scripture. Christianity insists that events are historical, whether they defy natural causes or are caused by God's supernatural intervention in operating history. The test is not the narrowly defined term of history, but the record that has been passed down to us.

Preaching Implication

Words are required to explain and expound historical events. Teaching someone how to do something may, and often does, require modeling for the learner. But gospel-centered preaching requires declarative preaching of historical events of which we have a trusted record. Historical events in and of themselves are not transformative as if as soon as we admit their credibility they turn magical. Rather, we must preach them as though they are *true* and *trustworthy*. *True*, in that they actually occurred.

Trustworthy, in that these events point to something worth leaning upon and giving our lives to.

The Gospel is Biblical

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

“...according to the Scriptures...”

The key to understanding the historicity of the Good News is to understand that the Bible has been passed down to us through the centuries in a trustworthy manner. Preservation is just as much a miracle as inspiration because, after thousands of years of transmission of the Scripture from copy to copy, language to language, and surviving attempt after attempt to destroy it, it still stands. “According to the Scripture” is our standard of practice.

Preaching Implication

The Bible is our basis faith and life, and it is not merely a historical book, though it does contain history. It is altogether in its own category. We can use critical methods to show standards that it meets, but it cannot be judged solely on those standards because it would then be subject to the standards. The standards cannot have more authority than the Scripture itself. The “inspiration stamp” bears witness to the truth, and it is the basis upon which we preach.

The Bible is not life itself. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. Scripture points away from itself and points to Jesus who gives life. When preaching ends with or even (if we dare say) overemphasizes Scripture, we have entered into bibliolatry and are worshipping something other than Jesus. This does not diminish the Bible in any way. Quite the opposite. It actually enhances its nature because it emphasizes the true nature of Scripture as the *witness to life* found only in Jesus Christ.

The Gospel is Apostolic

1 Corinthians 15:11

“So it makes no difference whether I preach or they preach, for we all preach the same message you have already believed.”

Notice the sequence of pronouns Paul uses. “I,” an Apostle, preach. “They,” the Apostles (plural), preach. “We all,” the Apostles (plural inclusive) preach the same message and this “you” have believed. “I,” “they,” “we,” and “you.” This points to the passing down of historic truth from personal, firsthand witnesses of the life of Jesus. The gospel comes through these witnesses.

Preaching Implication

We stand on the shoulders of reliable witnesses with whom we participate in the gospel and the story of the mission of redemption. Our trustworthiness rests on their shoulders. It is incumbent upon us to be genuine, honest, transparent, and as reliable

as we possibly can be. However, it is ultimately up to the Spirit to authenticate the message that we have received from reliable witnesses. This is both humbling and relieving. It is humbling because we realize we are only one piece of the puzzle and usually a small piece at that. It is relieving because we realize that the full responsibility of convincing and convicting is not up to us.

The Gospel is Theological

1 Corinthians 15

The following are selected portions throughout the chapter:

1. *God* raised Christ Jesus from the dead.⁷⁷
2. *God's* purpose was for Christ to die and rise. And not mere death, but that he dies for our sins, and rises for our justification.⁷⁸
3. *God's* wrath is against our sin and our sin is personal.⁷⁹
4. *God* pronounces the sentence of death against sin.⁸⁰
5. *God* is the one whom we have offended, who must be appeased. And what makes God most angry is idolatry, the “de-godding” of God, the putting of

⁷⁷ 1 Corinthians 15:4.

⁷⁸ 1Corinthians 15:3.

⁷⁹ 1Corinthians 15:17-18; 21-22.

⁸⁰ 1Corinthians 15:21.

something else in God's place. God is still jealous. Repentance is necessary because the coming of the king brings judgment as well as blessing.⁸¹

Preaching Implication

Preaching is theological work. Theology is the understanding of who God is, what he has done, why he has done it, what he is doing now, and how he is doing it. All of Scripture functions as a window through which we look to understand God's nature. There are indicatives as well as imperatives in Scripture.

The Gospel is Christological

1 Corinthians 15

"Christ" is used repeatedly throughout the chapter. Only Jesus is the name by which we can be saved. Jesus alone reconciles us to God. The gospel is not preached if Christ is not preached, both the person and work of Christ, which includes his atoning death and resurrection. Jesus gave an advanced hermeneutics and homiletics seminar when talking with the two travelers on the road to Emmaus. Everything in the Old Testament points to him, and the result of Jesus' seminar was their testimony.

⁸¹ 1Corinthians 15:24-28.

Luke 24:32

"They said to each other, 'Didn't our hearts burn within us as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?'"

Everything since in the New Testament points to Christ as well. Sinclair Ferguson puts it this way in his pamphlet entitled "Preaching Christ from the Old Testament:"

Most people not only don't preach Christ in the OT, but not in the NT either. The Bible is mainly about Him, not about you:

Jesus is the true and better Adam who passed the test in the garden and whose obedience is imputed to us.

Jesus is the true and better Abel who, though innocently slain, has blood now that cries out, not for our condemnation, but for acquittal.

Jesus is the true and better Abraham who answered the call of God to leave all the comfortable and familiar and go out into the void not knowing whither he went to create a new people of God.

Jesus is the true and better Isaac who was not just offered up by his father on the mount but was truly sacrificed for us. And when God said to Abraham, "Now I know you love me because you did not withhold your son, your only son whom you love from me," now we can look at God taking his son up the mountain and sacrificing him and say, "Now we know that you love us because you did not withhold your son, your only son, whom you love from us."

Jesus is the true and better Jacob who wrestled and took the blow of justice we deserved, so we, like Jacob, only receive the wounds of grace to wake us up and discipline us.

Jesus is the true and better Joseph who, at the right hand of the king, forgives those who betrayed and sold him and uses his new power to save them.

Jesus is the true and better Moses who stands in the gap between the people and the Lord and who mediates a new covenant.

Jesus is the true and better Rock of Moses who, struck with the rod of God's justice, now gives us water in the desert.

Jesus is the true and better Job, the truly innocent sufferer, who then intercedes for and saves his stupid friends.

Jesus is the true and better David whose victory becomes his people's victory, though they never lifted a stone to accomplish it themselves.

Jesus is the true and better Esther who didn't just risk leaving an earthly palace but lost the ultimate and heavenly one, who didn't just risk his life, but gave his life to save his people.

Jesus is the true and better Jonah who was cast out into the storm so that

we could be brought in.

Jesus is the real Rock of Moses, the real Passover Lamb, innocent, perfect, helpless, slain so the angel of death will pass over us. He's the true temple, the true prophet, the true priest, the true king, the true sacrifice, the true lamb, the true light, the true bread.⁸²

The Bible's really not about us—it's about him.

Preaching Implication

If the sermon does not somehow find its center, foundation, or force in Jesus, can it be called Christian? Many sermons in Protestant churches could be preached in synagogues, or on a self-help TV special, because they don't put Christ at the center of the Good News. He must be preached as the redeeming rescuer of us all.

The Gospel is Personal

1 Corinthians 15

Notice the use of the personal pronoun "you."

Though the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ are historical events and theological truths by which we live, they are not impersonal, abstract facts. Rather, they establish a personal salvation that all who believe by faith can experience. Each of us must understand the debt of sin we owe, the magnitude of the provision paid on our behalf, and that we are only acceptable because Jesus lived the life that we should have

⁸² Timothy Keller, "Preaching to the Heart" (lecture series delivered at Ockenga Institute of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, Massachusetts, 2006).

lived. We have a personal Savior (not privatized or individualized) who redeems people to live in community (not corporatized, but corporate) with one another.

Preaching Implication

The gospel is for individuals, but it is not individualistic. This means we have to work hard not to present the gospel for consumption; it is something we participate in through Christ. Privatized faith, where no one else has a say in one's life, is not presented in Scripture. We are saved in community for community, but it is not an impersonal transformation. I know him and am known by him personally. He knows my thoughts before I think them and my words before I speak them. Our preaching must also be accessible to different types of learners and listeners because that is one of the ways the gospel penetrates the hearts of the hearers. In the same way he has given us different genres of Scripture by which to know and identify with him, so we need to be careful to appeal widely to the needs of the hearer.

The Gospel is Communal/Corporate

1 Corinthians 15

The personal pronoun "you" is plural.

When the gospel is being addressed in Scripture, "you" is almost always plural. This means it is addressed to a community of people who live together, work together, eat and drink together, suffer loss together, celebrate victory together, mourn together,

and worship together. *Ecclesia* is community. We are never saved to ourselves, but to the good of a community. We are now free to give our lives away to each other, rather than taking every effort possible to keep them for ourselves. Hearing and participating in truth happens most often in community.

Preaching Implication

Because of the communal nature of our faith, we must make corporate applications as much as individual applications. No one lives and dies to themselves. So, even applications for individuals is for the good of the many. The entire Christian life and mission of the gospel is not up to any one individual. The Good News is that it is meant for a community to participate in and fulfill together.

The Gospel is Exclusive

1 Corinthians 15:21-22

“So you see, just as death came into the world through a man, now the resurrection from the dead has begun through another man. Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life.”

Sin and death are universal because we came from one man—Adam, our first father. There is no exclusivity to the inheritance we receive from him and the results of that inheritance. No one is left out of the will like a shunned member of the family. All are included. Yet, there is hope through another man, Jesus Christ who has come to

bring us new life so that we are not left helpless. The differences between these two Adams are great and to be expounded on further in this chapter and in Romans 5:12-21.

The point Paul is making in verses 21-22 is an exclusivity in Christ that is twofold. First, Christ is the only source for new life. There is no other option or alternative. There is hope, of that we are sure, but it can only be found in Christ. Second, only those who belong to Christ receive life. This exclusivity is not limited to those of a certain race, language, socioeconomic class, or any other such factor. Belonging denotes identification with, submission to, being owned by, living for, trusting in, being accepted by, and accepting Christ as the way, truth, and the life in order to receive life.

Preaching Implication

There is much debate in regards to the exclusivity versus the universality of the gospel. Of this we must be clear—preaching a cure to our hearers must be exclusive to Christ. We can offer no other solution for our sinful and terminal inheritance. If we offer another, we offer false hope, and thereby sentence our hearers to remain under the curse. There is no hope outside of Christ. This infuses us with passion because we know the urgency by which we speak. Every time we preach, there undoubtedly are some who are looking to something or someone else as their functional savior. We can passionately give them hope. This truth also gives us confidence of a sure hope. Doubt is vanquished and hope remains when people receive Christ. Christ must be offered as the hope and people must respond to participate in life.

The Gospel is Universal

1 Corinthians 15:23

“But there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised as the first of the harvest; then all who belong to Christ will be raised when he comes back.”

The gospel is a comprehensive vision of a new humanity drawn from every tribe and nation. It is not universal in the sense that it includes everyone without exception, but it is universal in the sense that it is for all who belong to Christ, regardless of ethnic or other groups. Most of the world’s fighting throughout history has been over nationality, race, or class. The gospel is countercultural in that it cuts right through these divisive differences and animosities. It also means that there is no type of person or sinner of any extreme who is beyond the reach of the gospel. It truly is the only universal, unifying truth. Everyone who belongs is given new life and everyone is welcome.

Preaching Implication

Lines of belief and disbelief must be drawn in our preaching to encourage movement by the hearer. Yet, we are free to call everyone who would take the life of Christ as their own. This means proactively reaching out to those who are like and not like us. It means strategizing in our preaching to show how the gospel is for all types of people, with all types of maladies and all types of histories. No one is beyond the reach of the gospel, and preaching is no respecter of persons. All of us are under the curse of

Adam, all of us can be freed from this curse, and all of us can experience this new life.

The Gospel is Transformational

1 Corinthians 15:17, 20, 34, 57-58

“And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins.”

“But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead...”

“Think carefully about what is right, and stop sinning. For to your shame I say that some of you don’t know God at all.”

“But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ. So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless.”

Just as Christ was transformed from death to life in the resurrection, so we will be transformed. But, the implications of the resurrection are not limited to the future, as if that was a limitation at all. Rather, the future speaks to our faith, hope, and forgiveness of sins in the present. Jesus’ resurrection is the deposit, or guarantee, of a secure future, and that future pulls us forward to living a certain way in the present. The gospel never leaves anyone the same, but massively transforms everything about us—internally, externally, presently, and our futures.

Preaching Implication

Our faith is not a “grit our teeth and bear it in the present until we make it to heaven” type of faith. It is not about letting the present be drowned in the future any more than the future being drowned in the present. Often, we tend to polarize in our preaching. Either we are too focused on the future, or too focused on the present. Rather, everything about the Christian faith is about our transformation in small ways in the present and significant ways in the future. Preaching transformation is neither license nor law, but instead heartfelt transformation because Jesus was resurrected in the past and we will be resurrected one day in the future. At times, that transformation comes by strong confrontation while at others it is through words of gentle comfort.

The Gospel is Cultural

1 Corinthians 15:58

“So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless.

Paul calls his new friends “brothers and sisters,” signifying a new people formed around the gospel. They are not all culturally bound together, but are bound together in Christ and the work that he has called them to do. There are at least two ways the gospel is cultural. First, it communicates across cultures and because this is true, it is for all cultures. When the veil was torn in the Holy of Holies, it was a sign that there was no

longer a cultural salvation limited to Israel only. The gospel goes to all people, emphasized in the Great Commission.

Second, it does not create a monolithic or formulaic culture. The gospel is far more powerful and creative than that. Rather, it redeems culture and creates a new counterculture inside of every culture. It takes the culture and its practices, showing how they have longed for a Savior and even pointed to God through indigenous practices. In redeeming it, the culture becomes a new counterculture, worshipping God in its own uniqueness. But the gospel goes farther than that by creating a new culture—the church. The church embodies various cultural expressions that are not a sign of disunity in the church. The beauty of the church is her unity *in* diversity. She is unified *around* Christ and diversified *in* worship and living. On one hand, we must always be aware of the dangers of cultural accommodation. On the other hand, we must be aware of withdrawal or isolation. Our light is dim if we are hidden by assuming the culture or by separating ourselves too much from it. The gospel invades the culture, turning the church into a city on a hill.

Preaching Implication

Preachers must always be aware of the culture around them. This begins at the most basic of level, such as language and stylistic markers. It grows even more effective as current events are addressed and interpreted in light of the gospel. It then moves into realms of culture to create something new—arts and entertainment, business,

education, family, media, and government. Preaching speaks to cultural transformation in clear ways, rather than encouraging accommodation or withdrawal.

The Gospel is Doxological

1 Corinthians 15:56-57

“For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. 57 But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

As Paul’s epic chapter draws to a close, he shifts from recounting history to giving vital information, offering rigorous argumentation to doxology—worship! Doxology is the basis of the entire Christian life. The first commandment is, “You must have no other God’s before me.” When we sin, we twist anything into something ultimate, and we are willing to do whatever it takes to have or experience it. Idols lead us away from God. In doing so, we are pursuing justification for living. For example, when we lie, we do so for some greater purpose—because it will get us something that we think will ultimately fulfill us. When we covet, we do so because that item holds out promise for a heart that endlessly desires. Thus, we have created an idol or god that we desire to obtain. The reason we do this is because we worship it, and the only way to change is to worship.

Preaching Implication

When preaching itself is worship (it makes much of God), then the response of the people will be obedient worship with their mouths, hearts, minds, and lives. When we worship God rightly, based upon truth we have discovered, we are transformed into a worshipping people who then live out the truth (that God has given us victory), and the first commandment becomes a part of the fabric of our lives.

Conclusion

As we have seen, preaching is the primary means by which God grows his kingdom. Preaching is not foundationless; it originates from, and communicates, the story and truth of the Bible. It is distinctly Trinitarian in that it reveals who God is and participates with Him in the process of preaching. It is gospel-centered, bringing transformation to all who will hear and obey.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

Adams, Jay Edward. *Preaching With Purpose: The Urgent Task of Homiletics*. Grand Rapids, MI: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1982.

“The amazing lack of concern for purpose among homileticians and preachers has spawned a brood of preachers who are dull, lifeless, abstract and impersonal; it has obscured truth, hindered joyous Christian living, destroyed dedication and initiative, and stifled service for Christ.”¹ Adams contends that purposelessness in preaching is deadly, which means preachers and students must discover the purpose of every sermon. Knowing what we intend to accomplish must be clear in our minds to avoid a cloud in the listener’s minds.

Anderson, Kenton C. *Choosing to Preach: A Comprehensive Introduction to Sermon Options and Structures*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006.

Anderson contends that preaching itself is non-negotiable, but the exact form it takes can be much more flexible because the Spirit allows people to hear from God as they hear his word preached through the different styles of the preacher. Anderson presents several options for preparing a sermon. As a preacher discerns the message

¹ Adams, *Preaching with Purpose*, 1.

from the text, does he begin with the text (deductive) or with the listener (inductive)? Is the focus on the idea (cognitive) or the image (affective)? The choices made lead to five possible sermon structures:

1. The **declarative** structure makes an argument.
2. The **pragmatic** structure solves a mystery.
3. The **narrative** structure tells a story.
4. The **visionary** structure paints a picture.
5. The **integrative** structure sings a song.

Each model is described in detail and related to well-known contemporary preachers, including John MacArthur, Rick Warren, Eugene Lowry, and Rob Bell. A CD with additional helpful resources is included, as well as discussion questions and exercises.

Bewes, Richard. *Speaking in Public Effectively*. Fearn, UK: Christian Focus, 1998.

The strength of this book is that it is intended for public speaking in general, which may or may not involve preaching formal sermons. It is designed for teachers, conference speakers, and those who speak in youth clubs, school projects, hosting meetings, or services. This means it is particularly helpful for this thesis because it is aimed at those who may or may not preach formally.

Bewes is an accomplished speaker who has traveled widely. He was the pastor at All Souls Church in London. His love for public speaking is evident as he talks about it in glowing terms and makes the reader want to go out and give it a go. This is an excellent primer and enjoyable for anyone, whether you are a beginner or a seasoned veteran.

Braga, James. *How to Prepare Bible Messages*. Rev. ed. Portland, OR: Multnomah, 1981.

This is a time-tested book, originally published in 1969. It combines classic public speaking techniques with classical theories of preaching. The benefit of this book is its logical, step-by-step guidance to preparing and delivering effective sermons. Each chapter thoroughly defines and describes each critical component of a sermon, from the introduction, to illustrations, and the conclusion.

Broadus, John Albert. *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, 4th ed. New York, NY: Harper, 1944.

This was my college text and, as an ignorant and arrogant young man, I thought it was outdated and wondered why we did not use an updated text. While it is legitimate to use updated texts, what does it say about the legitimacy of a book if it was originally published in 1870 and is still in print today?

In my opinion, the greatest strength of this book is the section on the *Four Functional Elements of a Sermon*: explanation, argumentation, application and illustration. These can be used in any order but form the heart of a good presentation in making a point in a sermon. In recent years, I have also found myself going back to the interesting section on the *Classification by Pattern*. He classifies the sermon by how the outlines are put together or shaped. He gives sixteen examples of outline constructions that could be used. It is a very helpful book.

Brown, Stephen W., Haddon W. Robinson, and William H. Willimon. *A Voice in the Wilderness: Clear Preaching in a Complicated World*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 1993.

This book is part of a series published by Multnomah Press on mastering ministry pressure points. This book deals with the pressure and opposition a pastor must face, including the cultural wars, and how inductive preaching to the postmodern audience can be most effective. This book is full of practical advice, such as a step-by-step plan to establish one's authority and to develop strength for the weekly grind. The authors were refreshingly honest in their approach to preaching, and the advice on short cuts was challenging. This is a very practical read from seasoned preachers.

Bryson, Harold T. *Expository Preaching: The Art of Preaching Through a Book of the Bible*. Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1995.

Bryson works on the development of expository preaching as a distinct homiletic genre by surveying the strength and weakness of various etymological, morphological, and substantive definitions of expository preaching that have arisen over the centuries. He then presents his own definition as "the art of preaching a series of sermons, either consecutive or selective, from a Bible book."² The majority of the book addresses the task of doing that type of preaching, especially with respect to preaching a book series. If you do this type of preaching—and in my opinion everyone should in their yearly

² Bryson, *Expository Preaching*, 39.

schedule—this book is a good start. He is a bit black and white, but his point is helpful.

Chapell, Bryan. *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon*, 2nd ed.

Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1994.

Chapell presents a guide to expository preaching, teaching the basics of preparation, organization, and delivery. His thematic emphasis is on how expository preaching can reveal the redemptive aims of Scripture, and he offers a comprehensive approach to the theory and practice of preaching. I find his bridge from the world of the Bible to today's world especially helpful, mainly because of the tool known as the Fallen Condition Focus (FCF) found in each text. There is an excellent chapter on illustrating the sermon, and one of the most helpful I've read on applications—contemporizing the biblical text, helping people see abstract truth in a way that is concrete, pictorial, sensible, and experimental. The book is probably too much info to completely digest as a beginner, but one to have in your library and regularly peruse.

Craddock, Fred B. *As One without Authority*. Rev. St. Louis, MO: Chalice, 2001.

Craddock's thesis is that deductive, propositional, one-way sermons should be replaced with inductive conversational sermons. Preachers must not come with their own agendas nor simply deliver a message from the Bible, but the sermon "must be in conversation with the issues of its own time and the voices that address those issues."³

³ Craddock, *As One without Authority*, viii.

The preacher must be one who is an equal in the conversation, not as one with the overbearing authority of a superior. Thus, inductive preaching is preaching as one without authority. His writing was more inspiring to me to be creative, rather than changing my philosophy altogether. You cannot survey the preaching spectrum without giving attention to Craddock. Being open to his helpful ideas is important, but—as always and with everyone—read critically.

Dally, John Addison. *Choosing the Kingdom: Missional Preaching for the Household of God.* Herndon, VA: Alban Institute, 2008.

Dally presents both a work of theology and a how-to guide for preachers who want to rethink both the form and the content of preaching as well as the goal of moving a congregation from *maintenance* to *mission*.

As a post-Christendom church reorients itself toward the mission of God, what might preaching look like? The announcement style of preaching is key because the gospel demands submission, but also includes good news. Dally explores these offers and nuanced orientation to sermon preparation to preach to those whose imaginations have been captured by the possibilities inherent in a missional identity, and to those who need to be captured.

Downs, Perry G. *Teaching for Spiritual Growth.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994.

Although this is not a preaching text proper, it is a text about how to teach for growth, rather than simply from an informational perspective. This text deals with two

questions:

1. What does it mean to be spiritually mature?
2. What can the church do to help people grow spiritually?

These questions are explored from the perspectives of theology, developmental psychology, and educational learning theory, integrating all three perspectives into a unified view of the teaching-learning process based on a biblical view of persons.

Theology is the divine side of spiritual growth that asks, "What does the nature of God tell us about teaching spiritual maturity?" Psychology asks, "How has God designed people to grow and how does human development affect the process of achieving spiritual maturity? Education is the learning process that produces spiritual growth that asks, "What is the process people go through to achieve spiritual maturity?" The goal is to help readers develop a philosophy of Christian education that will be applicable to a variety of ministry contexts.

Edwards, O. C. *A History of Preaching*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2004.

This is an attempt at a comprehensive guide that tells the story of the church's preaching ministry from a narrative and an original source perspective. Edwards intends to paint a detailed picture of what it means to preach the gospel by retelling the story of Christian preaching's development from its Hellenistic and Jewish roots in the New Testament to the late-twentieth century's discontent with outdated forms and emphasis on new modes of preaching (such as narrative).

Along the way, the author introduces us to the complexities and contributions of

preachers. Some we are already acquainted with, and some we will be introduced to for the first time. Origen, Chrysostom, Augustine, Bernard, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Edwards, Rauschenbusch, Barth—all of their distinctive contributions receive attention. Every preacher or student of preaching needs a historical presentation in order to develop a perspective on the discipline.

Ellsworth, Wilbur. *The Power of Speaking God's Word*. Fearn, UK: Christian Focus, 2000.

This book grew out of a comment from one of Ellsworth's church members who stated that 80 percent of Ellsworth's sermons were unmemorable, but that the other 20 percent had profoundly changed his life. The author started searching for reasons as to why some sermons had such a greater impact than others. One possible answer was to revisit the idea of preaching without a manuscript, after having previously dismissed this idea as producing sermons that were shallow, full of clichés and repetitious. Deep preaching needed more support than memory could provide. Nonetheless, Ellsworth started reducing his notes to the extent that they could be contained on one post-it note. A colleague noted that one would never have guessed how "so much effect could have come from a single change." The method adjustment is worth consideration.

Eswine, Zack. *Preaching to a Post-Everything World: Crafting Biblical Sermons that Connect with Our Culture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008.

In this work, Eswine asks the difficult question: In my preaching, could I now reach who I once was? Many times, the answer is to bring a gospel-light type of

preaching rather than a challenging biblical or expository type of preaching. Eswine offers a method of preaching that embraces biblical exposition, but does so in *missional* terms. That means we must recognize the different cultural situations in which the gospel must be preached from a global context, while still being faithful to the Bible. This context can be called a “multi-everything, post-everything world.”

Galli, Mark, and Craig Brian Larson. *Preaching That Connects: Using Journalistic*

Techniques to Add Impact. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994.

Galli and Larson present the idea that preachers not only want to be understood—good ones want to grab attention and win hearts. The proposal of this book is that preachers look to the craft of journalistic techniques to create effective and captivating preaching. The authors address the entire sermon, from the critical introduction, to the bridge, to illustrations, and then the final application. Key points include the five techniques for generating creative ideas, six options for illustrations, and the ten rules for great storytelling—and why the transition sentence is the hardest sentence to write. I use this as a text for my class because it is highly accessible and provides immediate help to the student and preacher.

Gibson, Scott M., and Keith Willhite. *The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching: Connecting the*

Bible to People. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003.

This is a book in honor of Haddon Robinson and the years he has invested in teaching preaching, especially his contribution of “The Big Idea of Preaching.” The

contributors to this volume include: Paul Borden, Scott M. Gibson, Duane Litfin, Terry Mattingly, John Reed, Bruce L. Shelley, Donald R. Sunukjian, Joseph M. Stowell III, Bruce K. Waltke, Scott Wenig, and Keith Willhite. They show that Big Idea preaching is significant and can be effective today.

Greidanus, Sidney. *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988.

Greidanus aims to connect biblical hermeneutics and homiletics, which are typically thought of as connected, yet disconnected. He develops a holistic contemporary approach to the interpretation and preaching of biblical texts by focusing specifically on the literary features of the text. After presenting these principles, he then applies them to four specific genres: Hebrew narratives, prophetic literature, the Gospels, and the Epistles. This book is not for the beginner, but well worth the sweaty work.

Greidanus, Sidney. *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999.

Greidanus argues for the need to preach Christ in every sermon and to preach regularly from the Old Testament. The question is “How can this be done while being faithful to the text (without treating it as a “pre-text”) and still preach Christ without using that text as a mere launching pad to jump to Jesus?” His answer is a new (or adjusted) Christocentric model and methodology. Like his previous text,, this is not for

beginners, but it is worth the work to read and understand.

Heisler, Greg. *Spirit-Led Preaching: The Holy Spirit's Role in Sermon Preparation and Delivery*. Nashville, TN: Broadman, 2007.

Heisler's theme is:

Spirit-Led Preaching: The Holy Spirit's Role in Sermon Preparation and Delivery is a call issued to preachers, pastors, and teachers of homiletics to recover the Holy Spirit for expository preaching in the same way we have recovered the biblical text. My plan for doing this is to recover the doctrine of pneumatology (*the study of spiritual beings/phenomena*) for our theology of preaching, resulting in a renewed emphasis on the powerful combination of Word and Spirit working together as the catalyst for powerful expository preaching.⁴

Heisler examines how the Holy Spirit illuminates and empowers the preacher, opens the hearts of the hearers, and applies the message to lives. This is a good call not to ignore the Spirit's work by relying on exegesis and technique (as if that were possible). I use this as one of my textbooks because I do think the Spirit is largely ignored in greater evangelicalism.

Henderson, David W. *Culture Shift: Communicating God's Truth to our Changing World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998.

The connection between the message of Scripture and the audience is communication. The message from Scripture is timeless, but the audience endlessly changes. So what does that mean for communication? That is the subject of

⁴ Heisler, *Spirit-Led Preaching*, xvi.

Henderson's work. He wrestles with communicating an unchanging message to changing times without compromise or irrelevance. He does a one-two punch in asking: How do you communicate to different types of people and what communicates best to those people? He addresses consumers, spectators, self-absorbed individuals, legalists and others. It is a thoughtful and incisive study with the foundational tenant that people differ, and because of this, certain types of communication connect more effectively, depending upon the person. Our responsibility as preachers is to communicate across the spectrum as effectively as possible so that life-change will occur.

Lloyd-Jones, David Martyn. *Preaching and Preachers*. London, UK: Hodder and Stoughton, 1971.

Based on a series of lectures originally given by Lloyd-Jones to the students of Westminster Theological Seminary in 1969, this is a collection of essays revolving around the essence of powerful preaching. If there were such a thing as a one-volume summary of preaching, this would be an example. Lloyd-Jones defends the primacy of preaching, of which he dogmatically asserts there is no substitute. He addresses the issue of calling, and he challenges preachers to take theirs seriously: "The most urgent need in the Christian Church today is true preaching." He also provides practical direction on the task of preparing a sermon, sharing insights on the shape and form of a message, as well as covering such topics as the use of humor, giving invitations in a message, the preacher's relationship to the congregation, and the Spirit's role in the

power of the pulpit. He is so dogmatic that it may take two reads to open up to his emphasis but, as a classic, this is worth it.

Lewis, Ralph L., and Gregg Lewis. *Inductive Preaching: Helping People Listen*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1983.

The Bible is inspired and not open to changes, but the forms that sermons take are open for discussion. That is why this book is so helpful; because it gives an alternate to what has been assumed as THE way of preaching, as if the form is inspired. The authors' goal is to figure out how to *involve* the listener, rather than just *address* them. They analyze the two forms of induction and deduction, show their strengths and weaknesses, and how they can be used separately or together.

Their analysis of Jesus and his preaching in chapter 6 is masterful. *Appendix 2: Checklist of Inductive Characteristics* is something every preacher should consider. For those who are walking the bridge from using deduction to induction, *Appendix 4: The Strategy for Making Traditional Sermon Structures Inductive* is invaluable.

The critique I would make about this book is that it is like traveling down a rabbit hole. It can be dizzying because the authors have presented so many nuances to the inductive sermon. On one hand, this proves their point that there are endless forms that can be taken, but on the other hand, it can be challenging to process all the options. That being said, reading it in bite-size portions, while preaching can be transformative.

Litfin, A. Duane. *Public Speaking: A Handbook for Christians*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1992.

Litfin gives a basic (college and seminary level) introduction to the principles of public speaking from a Christian perspective. Though not addressing preaching directly, it is valuable to learn how to find, develop, support, and focus public speaking. The section on wording the ideas for speech is helpful. He offers a beneficial presentation of how to effectively deliver your remarks and how to prepare a biblical message.

Long, Thomas G. *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1989.

Long argues that the literary forms and dynamics of biblical texts can, and should, affect the different forms of sermons created from those texts. This is the case not only because of *what* the texts say, but also *how* they say it. He presents a methodology for taking the literary characteristics of biblical texts into account in the text-to-sermon process, and then applies that methodology in separate chapters on preaching on psalms, proverbs, narratives, parables, and epistles. This was one of the most helpful books for me in understanding how the sermon is based on the Bible's authority as origin, but also in construction.

Long, Thomas G., and Leonora Tubbs Tisdale. *Teaching Preaching as a Christian Practice: A New Approach to Homiletical Pedagogy*. Louisville, KY: WJKP, 2008.

This work explains the idea that preaching is a practice that can be taught and

learned. Arguing that preaching is a living practice with a long tradition, an identifiable shape, and a broad set of norms with desired outcomes, a group of noted scholars examine pedagogical approaches that will introduce students to the practice of preaching and encourage a life-long process of becoming effective practitioners. The book concludes with designs for a basic preaching course, and it addresses the question of how preaching courses fit into the larger patterns of seminary curricula. At times, it is a bit technical, but that is in line with the purpose of the book and can be helpful for those who teach preaching.

Lowry, Eugene L., and Eugene L. Lowry. *The Homiletical Plot: The Sermon as Narrative Art Form*. Rev. ed. Louisville, KY: WJKP, 2001.

Lowry emphasizes a storyline aspect of narrative preaching that appeals to people's interest, as much of the Bible does. The listener is drawn in by stories, so Lowry proposes a form of preaching whereby narrative elements are used in order to maintain the attention of the audience and to present the gospel as it truly is, a reversal or turnabout to our typical ways of thinking. The five stages of the homiletical plot are: upsetting the equilibrium, analyzing the discrepancy, disclosing the clue to resolution, experiencing the gospel, and anticipating the consequences. This is a very creative presentation of preaching.

McDill, Wayne. *The 12 Essential Skills for Great Preaching*. Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1994.

McDill offers one of the most practical presentations of preaching I have seen. Rather than give the philosophy of preaching in theoretical terms, he presents a tool to develop skills with many practical exercises along the way. The 12 skills include: diagramming the text, noting the text details, asking research questions, naming the text idea, bridging from text to sermon, writing sermon divisions, balancing persuasive elements, exploring natural analogies, drawing pictures/telling stories, touching human experience, aiming for a faith response, and planning the oral presentation.

Mohler, R. Albert, and Don Kistler. *Feed My sheep: A Passionate Plea for Preaching*. Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 2002.

This is not a “how to” nor is it a theological treaty on preaching. Rather, it is more prophetic in nature, serving as a call to preachers to return to Scripture as the foundation for preaching and to do so in such a way that is compelling, authoritative, and with confidence that God will act through the act of preaching. The book focuses on one aspect of preaching, beginning with a chapter on the primacy of preaching, which sets the stage for the remainder of the book.

Oden, Thomas C. *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry*. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1983.

Oden says, “It is dangerous to the health of the church for ministry to be

practiced without good foundations in Scripture and tradition, reason and experience.”

This volume is an addition that leans heavily on the tradition portion by giving an integrated view of two millennia of ecumenical Christian thinking concerning who pastors are, what they do, and how they do it. Though only chapter nine deals directly with preaching, it is worthwhile to give attention to the whole, because preaching is not the only activity in which a pastor must engage, and there is a context to everything else.

Old, Hughes Oliphant. *The Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures in the Worship of the Christian Church, Volumes 1-7.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998-2010.

This is a multivolume series that canvasses the history of preaching from the words of Moses at Mount Sinai through modern times. Old is considered the preeminent historian in this regard.

Volume 1, *The Biblical Period*, begins with a survey discussing the roots of the Christian ministry of Scripture in the worship of Israel. He then examines the preaching of Christ and the Apostles, which leads the development and practice of Christian preaching in the second and third centuries, concluding with the ministry of Origen.

Volume 2, *The Patristic Age*, continues Old's historical survey by focusing on preaching as it was developed and practiced by the Greek schools of Alexandria and Antioch. Old goes on to consider preaching in the Syriac church and the flourishing of Latin preaching in the Christian Empire. He concludes with the ministries of Leo the Great, Peter Chrysologus, and Gregory the Great.

Volume 3, *The Medieval Church*, focuses on the Middle Ages by surveying the development of preaching over the span of a thousand years, exploring the preachers of sixth-century Byzantium, the church's mission to the barbarians, the preaching of the gospel during Charlemagne's Holy Roman Empire, the era of the great monastic orders, and the prophetic preachers of Renaissance Italy. Giving special attention to preaching greats like Bernard of Clairvaux and Bonaventure, extensive analysis is given to several sermons from the period in order to show how the church presented the gospel in this little-known era.

Volume 4, *The Age of the Reformation*, focuses on changes in preaching due to the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Counter-Reformation. This volume covers not only what the Reformers and Counter-Reformers preached, but also their reform of preaching itself. Special note is given to the main events and people involved in the development of preaching at this time—Luther, Calvin, Thomas of Villanova, Francis Xavier, William Perkins, John Donne, Johann Gerhard, Jacques Bossuet, and others. This survey includes the critical discussion of how preaching was itself an act of worship and how this thinking developed during this period.

Volume 5, *Moderatism, Pietism, and Awakening*, brings the story of preaching up through the eighteenth century, showing how after the tumultuous age of the Reformation, preaching in the eighteenth century was driven in several very different directions. The book's first chapter considers moderatism, an inevitable reaction against the high tensions of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. In the second chapter Old discusses pietism, examining the contributions of Philipp Jakob Spener, Theodorus

Jacobus Frelinghuysen, John Wesley, George Whitefield, Samuel Davies, and other preachers. The remaining seven chapters delve into a variety of national and denominational schools of preaching.

Volume 6, *The Modern Age*, tells the story of preaching and worship from the French Revolution to the fall of the Berlin Wall (1789-1989). During this period, preaching continued to support the historic Christian faith while the church endeavored to resist secularization, encountered biblical criticism, and initiated bold overseas missions. Opening with the revived Catholic Order of Preachers, continental Protestants such as Abraham Kuyper, Friedrich Schleiermacher and his self-consciously modern preaching, and the Victorian figures, such as John Henry Newman and Charles Haddon Spurgeon, are presented. He carefully lays out the tensions between Old and New School Calvinism, as well as the beginnings of black preaching and the great American tradition of Charles Finney, Dwight L. Moody, and Harry Emerson Fosdick. In the twentieth century, the focus falls on the crises of the two world wars, especially the courageous ministries of German, Dutch, and Hungarian preachers during the Third Reich.

Volume 7, *Our Own Time*, takes up the story in the sixties with the Second Vatican Council following to the house churches of China and the preaching of the Archbishop of Uganda, known as the "Billy Graham of Africa." Along the way, Old looks at the engaging preaching found in Latin America, the rise of the modern megachurch, the role of Joan Alexandru's preaching in bringing down the house of Ceausescu, and other historically significant moments in preaching.

Though these volumes are intimidating because of the breadth of survey, they are—in my opinion—the best-collected source for the history of preaching.

Pasquarello III, Michael. *Christian Preaching: A Trinitarian Theology of Proclamation*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2006.

This book focuses on the theological foundations of preaching, rather than methodology. It is about the *what* and *why* of preaching rather than the *how*. This is a very good biblical and historical look at preaching, regardless of denominational stance. What I appreciate most in this book is how it grounds preaching in the Trinity and in a theology that is God-focused rather than man-centered. Although it is a theological text, each chapter includes a sermon as an example that shows how theology works itself into the pulpit.

Peterson, Eugene H. *Eat This Book: A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006.

Although this is not a book that directly addresses preaching, it is helpful because it deals with vital subjects associated with preaching from a pastoral perspective, such as the nature of language, the role of Scripture, translations, and helping to get the Bible inside people. Peterson's challenge is to read the Scriptures on its own terms, as God's revelation, and to live it as we read it. Included is the "inside story" behind the origin and process of Peterson's popular Bible translation, *The Message*.

Peterson, Eugene H. *The Jesus Way: A Conversation on the Ways That Jesus is the Way.*

Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007.

Once again, this is not a book that directly addresses the discipline of preaching, but helps in three important ways:

1. It talks about Jesus in an eye-opening fashion by considering all the ways that Jesus is *The Way* compared to the distorted ways the modern American church has chosen to follow. Arguing that the way Jesus leads and the way that we follow are symbiotic, Peterson begins with an extensive study of how the ways of those who came before Christ (Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, Isaiah of Jerusalem, and Isaiah of the Exile) prepared the way, which became complete in Jesus.
2. He then challenges the ways of the contemporary American church, showing in stark relief how what we have chosen to focus on—consumerism, celebrity, charisma, and so on—obliterates what is unique in the Jesus way.
3. The greatest benefit in regards to preaching is to step back and learn *how* he talks about Jesus in order to be able to incorporate that type of language and speaking style in our preaching, because it endeavors to get Jesus beneath the surface of our hearers.

Piper, John. *The Supremacy of God in Preaching.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1990.

Whereas Peterson's books do not directly address preaching, Piper's work most definitely does. He contends that preaching is not about preaching, which is often the

case for preachers (finding a text, understanding a text, creating a sermon, constructing that sermon well, and delivering the sermon effectively). Nor is preaching simply an exercise in motivational speaking that gives techniques for living. The goal of preaching is far greater—to worship God, and to proclaim him as supreme. It is God’s desire to be glorified through the preacher, and the aim of the preacher is to respond accordingly. This is not a “how to” guide for the pulpit ministry, but instead, it is a theological and philosophical challenge issued to every preacher to elevate the God of the Bible through sound biblical preaching. In the second half of the book, he zeros in on Jonathan Edwards as an example of a God-centered theology/philosophy of preaching and how it was practically demonstrated. This is an important read for any preacher.

Quicke, Michael J. *360-degree Preaching: Hearing, Speaking, and Living the Word.*

Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003.

Quicke examines the scriptural roots of preaching and touches on church history in order to show the primacy of preaching. The catchy title of “360-degree” preaching has two major aspects:

1. The Trinitarian dynamic is when we are actively aware and participating with God the Father revealing God the Son by and through God the Holy Spirit. The response of the hearer is to move back toward God.
2. The author then focuses on preaching practices and what he calls the *preaching swim*, which is an immersion into Scripture, interpretation of the Scripture, sermon design, sermon delivery, and outcomes of preaching. I

think this is one of the better models of contemporary preaching available.

Quicke, Michael J. *360-degree Leadership: Preaching to Transform Congregations.*

Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2006.

In the follow-up to the above-mentioned work, Quicke develops his model in regards to the connection between preaching and leading by showing how preaching is the main vehicle for leading congregational change. Many in ministry see preaching and church leadership as separate responsibilities: “Most writing on Christian leadership omits preaching, and most books on preaching leave out leadership.” He develops the concept of preacher types (herald, teacher, inductive, and narrative) and how that directly corresponds to leader types (director, strategist, team builder, and operations). This is a valuable contribution to preaching literature because it gets the preacher to think about more than conveying information, which is often a trap, or getting stuck in the internalized application.

Reid, Robert Stephen. *The Four Voices of Preaching: Connecting Purpose and*

Identity Behind the Pulpit. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2006.

Reid argues that pastors will be more faithful and effective in their preaching when they understand exactly what they are trying to accomplish when they enter the pulpit. Do they want to encourage? Offer wisdom? Persuade folks to take up a particular course of action? Prophetically criticize the church or society? Reid contends that preachers tend to generally adopt one of four possible voices for their preaching:

teaching, encouraging, testifying, or sage. He shows how these four voices differ, helps pastors understand which voice is predominantly theirs, and helps them sharpen the appropriate preaching skills. There is a wrinkle in most preaching texts somewhere between purpose of sermon and identity of preacher that this text helps clarify. Sample sermons of each type of voice are included.

Robinson, Haddon W. *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2001.

Without question, this has been the most influential book on preaching I have ever read. No matter how many times I read it or teach from it, I am challenged to think more deeply about preaching. Robinson's development of the Big Idea is the most helpful tool I have encountered. It is not simple or simplistic in nature, but when achieved, it brings clarity to a text and sermon like no other preaching tool. It brings clarity to the sermon preparation process as well as delivery.

The *10 Stages in the Development of the Expository Sermon* are indispensable steps in every sermon that is prepared. Once you accomplish stage 3 in *Discovering the Exegetical Idea*, moving on to stage 4 where you submit the idea to three developmental questions in *Analyzing the Exegetical Idea*, is the most difficult and helpful process. This is sweaty work of not just formulating an idea but developing it. We can explain it, prove it, and apply it. This is what distinguishes Robinson's presentation from all the others. Taking the step of developing the Big Idea is one thing, but to develop that idea into something that is significant and impactful is quite

another. But this is Robinson's gift—he makes the unusually challenging work seem accomplishable. This can be attributed to his clarity in writing. It is very difficult to misunderstand the content of his book but very quickly the reader realizes how challenging it is to communicate clearly.

As stated in his introduction, the author intends to give a “method to those learning to preach or to experienced people who want to brush up on the basics.”⁵ I think he successfully accomplishes that goal because I stand somewhere in the middle of these two ranks and continue to find gold in these pages. If I was limited to only one book on preaching to keep or give to any preacher, this would be the one.

Robinson, Haddon W. *Biblical Sermons: How Twelve Preachers Apply the Principles of Biblical Preaching*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1989.

This is a collection of sermons from some of Robinson's students, delivered with the Big Idea and the 10 stages applied. It is difficult to get the full impact of these sermons because we do not have them in audio, which would doubtlessly change the impression of them from print. Nonetheless, it is helpful to see what they did, and—most valuably I think—are the interviews after each manuscript. Robinson gets to the heart of the sermon by discussing not just the content, but also the thought process that the preacher went through in preparation. For example, in the interview with James Litfin, a question arises that he asks when preparing, “What's the question to which, if

⁵ Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 14.

somebody asked it, I would offer this kind of material in response?"⁶ This is an excellent backdoor way to discovering the essence of a passage and how to bring it into everyday life. Robinson's comments in regard to Lutzer's sermon are quite memorable, "When the flint of people's questions strike the steel of the Word of God, a spark emerges that makes a sermon glow."⁷ This is the kind of thoughtful, beneficial, and even poetic help that resides in this book.

Robinson, Haddon W., and Torrey W. Robinson. *It's All in How You Tell It: Preaching First-person Expository Messages*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003.

The Robinsons (father and son) have collaborated in this small volume on preaching first-person expository sermons in order to help the preacher get inside the characters of Scripture and the imagination of the listeners. Questions addressed include: What makes a good story? How do you tell and retell biblical stories creatively? How do you tell and retell biblical stories while being faithful to the unchanging Scripture? What makes a good story well-told? I found this book to spark my imagination in preaching, whether I fully adopt the first person expository style of preaching or simply improve in my story telling.

⁶ Robinson, *Biblical Sermons*, 111.

⁷ Robinson, *Biblical Sermons*, 42.

Robinson, Haddon W., and Craig Brian Larson. *The Art and Craft of Biblical Preaching: A Comprehensive Resource for Today's Communicators*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005.

Edited by Robinson and Larson, this is a practical encyclopedia written on the practice of preaching using significant resources from the ministries of *Christianity Today International*. The 11 major sections contain close to 200 articles, which cover topics such as changing lives, sermon structure, the Big Idea, introductions, outlining, transitions, conclusions, passionate delivery, application, leveraging illustrations, telling stories, preaching narrative texts, topical preaching, expository preaching, evangelistic preaching, preaching to postmodern society, using humor, speaking with authority, and many others. Entries are characterized by practicality, rather than high theory, in order to address skill and implementation of ideas. Contributors include a *Who's Who* of preaching from a cross section of denominations and traditions, such as John Ortberg, Rick Warren, Warren Wiersbe, Alice Mathews, John Piper, Andy Stanley, and many others. The best way to use this book is to read entries over an extended period of time. This is possible due to the fact that the entries are generally rather brief.

Smith, Robert, and James Earl Massey. *Doctrine That Dances: Bringing Doctrinal Preaching and Teaching to Life*. Nashville, TN: Broadman, 2008.

Smith proposes that doctrine should be an integral part of our preaching, but it should never be done drily. Unfortunately, much of doctrinal preaching is done in a boring fashion. Rather, doctrine should *dance*. Expressing these complementary ideas,

Smith uses two major metaphors. First, the preacher is to be an *exegetical escort* who takes seriously the truths of Scripture and leads people to see their significance. Second, the preacher must be a *doxological dancer* who rejoices in the truth he preaches. The reason this is so important is because: "Doctrine without worship is empty. Worship without doctrine leads to ignorance."

Stott, John. *Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Preaching Today*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982.

This is one of my favorite single volumes on preaching. Stott's thesis is that preaching is indispensable because there is a chasm between the biblical world and the modern world. This chasm is bridged through the preaching and proclamation of the Word of God by a preacher who stands in the gap between these two worlds, empowered by the Spirit. In order to span these two worlds, Stott gives a historical sketch of preaching, responds to contemporary objections, provides theological foundations for preaching, speaks of preaching as bridge-building, tells preachers how to study, prepare, and encourages sincerity, earnestness, courage, and humility in the pulpit. This is a must read for every preacher.

Sunukjian, Donald Robert. *Invitation to Biblical Preaching: Proclaiming Truth with Clarity and Relevance*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2007.

This book is about showing versus telling. By that I mean, most preaching books I have read *tell* how to construct and deliver sermons. This book differentiates itself by

showing how to go through this process by weaving sample portions of sermons throughout. He uses the same sermon examples and develops them as he works through the entire process. One of the common questions is: “How do you arrive at the Big Idea or what Sunukjian calls ‘Take Home Truth?’” Although I don’t usually wait to determine it until after discovering the text outline and truth outline, this is the recommendation and is reasonable and helpful. The result is then to determine “what is the largest question the biblical author is addressing...and the answer he is giving.”⁸ I was hoping to find a bit more specific discussion on this matter (i.e. How do you determine which question is looms largest in the mind of the author and is it acceptable to preach a minor issue in the text?). Going through the process of two outlines is tedious but forces you to be clear.

Chapter 5, “Ask the Right Questions” is an excellent chapter. The three questions are very important and fill in the sermon outline. The questions on page 88 under *Understanding, Belief and Behavior* are worth their weight in gold. The question, “What does it look like in real life?” is helpful. The question is followed by the statement: “Develop mental pictures that *apply* the biblical concept, not ones that simply *illustrate* it.” This is a very helpful development in the same preaching philosophy developed by Robinson.

⁸ Sunukjian, *Invitation to Biblical Preaching*, 73.

Vines, Jerry, and Jim Shaddix. *Power in the Pulpit: How to Prepare and Deliver*

Expository Sermons. Chicago, IL: Moody, 1999.

The breadth, rather than its depth, is the strength of this book. It begins with the first thought about a sermon and with the last word of the presentation. One of the tools given on page 136 is the checkpoints for “Putting Your Proposition To The Test.” Is it promising, general (timeless, universal), simple, clear, comprehensive, important and sermonic? These types of quick checks and charts are scattered throughout the book and ready to use. The chart on page 162 summarizing how the three different methods of structuring the same passage (key word, analytical, sermonic plot) is possibly the most helpful section in the book for me. While appreciating all three, I have reacted to the key word approach possibly due to the overuse in my upbringing, and have recently gravitated more toward analytical and sermonic plot. The key is not simply to retell, but to exegete the text. If you are looking for tools like these to use in sermon preparation and delivery, this book will be helpful.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT DESIGN

Introduction

While pastoring in New Port Richey, Florida and enrolled in the Doctor of Ministry program at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, I was an adjunct professor at Trinity College of Florida from 2005-2011. During that time, I taught the course included in this thesis entitled *Introduction to Preaching*. The students who took this course were Religion majors in the third year of their four year undergraduate studies program.

Setting

Trinity College has existed for over seventy-five years. The ongoing mission is “to equip men and women for Christian service for the church and all humanity through effective Biblical, Professional and General Education leading to associate and baccalaureate degrees.” This mission leads to a commitment to provide students with classroom training, opportunities for ministry, career advancement, and personal support from faculty and staff, in hopes of developing in students personal values rooted in a Christ-centered worldview. Trinity College is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of the Association for Biblical Higher Education to award associate and

baccalaureate degrees.¹ The Association for Biblical Higher Education is recognized as an institutional accreditor by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation and the U.S. Department of Education.²

Project Design

This project involved the distribution of a survey with the course materials used at Trinity College. The intent of the survey was to determine what could be adapted and applied from the course materials for the Cultor House ministry interns. The survey had 18 questions that used the Lickert scale to evaluate the components of the syllabus and the course materials for clarity, reasonable application to the Cultor House context, and the level of modification deemed necessary for that application. The survey also included 6 open-ended questions that sought explanations connected to the Lickert scale questions. A final question asked the role that the respondent occupied at Grace Church, where Cultor House is located. This final question was intentionally last with the hopes of minimizing any skewing of the respondent's answers to the earlier questions.

¹ Located at 5850 T.G. Lee Blvd, Suite 130, Orlando, Florida 32822.

² See www.trinitycollege.edu.

Rationale

Rather than recreate a new course, it seemed advisable to adapt a course that was already prepared and taught. This provided several benefits that included a better use of time, a familiarity with time needed to provide instruction and assessments, and an understanding of the material that required little extra time to relearn prior to teaching.

Given this approach, the next necessary step was to determine how to best adapt materials design for the college classroom to work in a church-based ministry training course. It seemed the best course of action was to obtain feedback from those directly involved, who were well-acquainted with Grace Church and with Cultor House: the senior pastoral staff, the junior pastoral staff, and the ministry interns.

Project Implementation

After preparing the survey, it was distributed via email to the interns and ministry staff of Grace Church and Cultor House. The course materials that follow in the remainder of this chapter accompanied the survey. Within approximately 2-3 days, 21 completed surveys were returned. The results were compiled and analyzed, and then combined with the student evaluations received from Trinity College. Key feedback and reflections on that feedback will be presented in the next chapter.

COURSE OUTLINE

Purpose of Course

The purpose of this course is to discover, at an introductory level, the theology, philosophy, and practical issues involved in the preparation and delivery of sermons.

Course Objectives

Upon successfully completing this course:

1. The student will understand the task of preparing and delivering sermons on an introductory level from a theological, philosophical, and practical perspective.
2. The student will identify preaching that is biblically based, gospel oriented and Christ-centered with the intention of transforming the listener.
3. The student will prepare, construct, and deliver sermons that include the Big Idea, an introduction, the body, multiple applications, varied illustrations and effective conclusions.
4. The student will complete written evaluations that demonstrate the ability to evaluate preaching in print and oral form critically and constructively.

Course Procedures

Attendance: Due to the important nature of class participation, students will be allowed 5 absences during the semester. If absences exceed this amount, the student's status will be up for review and potentially terminated.

Assignments: Assignments must be turned in during class on the day they are due. If a student is absent, it is his responsibility to follow up with the teacher regarding completion.

Plagiarism: Students should make sure to cite any and all sources used in their writing and preaching. It is their responsibility to distinguish between what work is theirs and what is not, and to credit those who have contributed in any way. Failure to do so is plagiarism.

Course Requirements

Classroom Participation: A high level of classroom participation is expected from every student. There will be open dialogue based upon reading assignments and sermon evaluations.

Reading and Reports: Textbooks must be read completely, and a Reading Report (see *Critical Book Review* handout for details) must be turned in on the day they are due. All work must be typed and multiple pages must be stapled (paper clips will not be accepted). Reading Reports are due in the following manner:

1. *The Supremacy of God in Preaching*: a half-page summary and 3 discussion questions for each chapter.
2. *Spirit Led Preaching*: a one-paragraph summary and 3 discussion questions for each chapter.
3. *Biblical Preaching*: all Questions for Review and Discussion (see handout) must be answered, as well as the exercises for chapters 2 and 4.

Memorization: Periodically we will memorize Scripture and content of *Biblical Preaching* together.

Sermon Outline: Each student will be required to present to the class his sermon outline (see Sermon Outline handout for details).

Sermons and Evaluations: Each resident will prepare and deliver one, 20-25 minute sermon in class. A double-spaced, stapled in the upper left hand corner, full manuscript must be turned in on the day of sermon delivery. Evaluations of sermons delivered in class will be turned in by each student and reviewed. If a student misses a day of lab, he is required to listen to a sermon from any communication device chosen, and turn in an evaluation form for that sermon.

Required Texts

The Supremacy of God in Preaching, 2nd ed., John Piper

Spirit-Led Preaching, Greg Heisler

Biblical Preaching, 2nd Edition, Haddon Robinson

Class Schedule

SESSION	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT DUE
1	Course Introduction: The Glory and Burden of Preaching	
2	Surprise Assignment!	
3	Surprise Assignment! (cont)	Memorization: 2 Timothy 4:1-5
4	<i>The Supremacy of God in Preaching</i>	SGP Reading Report
5	<i>The Supremacy of God in Preaching</i>	SGP Reading Report
6	The Gospel in Preaching	Memorization: 1 Timothy 4:1-8
7	The Gospel in Preaching	
8	<i>Spirit-Led Preaching</i>	SLP Reading Report
9	<i>Spirit-Led Preaching</i>	SLP Reading Report
10	Audio Sermon: Evaluation and Discussion	Memorization: 1 Timothy 4:9-16
11	Audio Sermon: Evaluation and Discussion	
12	<i>Biblical Preaching: Chapters 1-4</i>	BP Review Questions Memorization: Definition of Expository Preaching
13	<i>Biblical Preaching: Chapters 1-4</i>	
14	<i>Biblical Preaching: Chapters 1-4</i>	
15	<i>Biblical Preaching: Chapters 5-8</i>	BP Review Questions
16	<i>Biblical Preaching: Chapters 5-8</i>	
17	<i>Biblical Preaching: Chapters 5-8</i>	
18	<i>Biblical Preaching: Chapters 9-10</i> A Final Word	BP Review Questions
19-22	Lab: Student Sermon Outlines	
23-28	Lab: Student Preaching	

CONVERSATION 1

THE GLORY AND BURDEN OF PREACHING

Introduction: The Paradox of Preaching

1. Preaching can be the most *difficult* yet the most *rewarding* part of your ministry.
2. Preaching can be the most *draining* yet the most *energizing* ministry you do.
3. Preaching can be the biggest *burden* yet the most *joyful* one to carry.
4. Preaching can be the greatest *sanctifier* or the loudest *condemner* of your soul.
5. Preaching can bring *familiarity* with God and cause you to realize the infinite *differences* that exist between you and the mysteries of God.
6. Preaching can reveal your *skill* or show your *inability*.
7. Preaching can display *courage* or show your *fear*.
8. Preaching can be filled with *transparency* or show the darkest *disguise*.
9. Preaching brings you face to face with the *best* and *worst* of humanity.
10. Preaching can be your highest act of *God-worship* or you lowest act of *self-indulgence*.

Core Convictions About Preaching

1. Preaching is primary.

Mark 1:14-15	Jesus enters the ministry scene “preaching” because that was his primary way of bringing in the kingdom.
Luke 10:16	The preaching of the disciples was so integral to the expansion of the kingdom, which means the King Jesus as well, that if their preaching was rejected then Jesus was rejected.
Romans 10:14-17	Belief (faith) comes from hearing the Word of God, and the way we hear is by preaching. Therefore, the divinely ordained means through which people are converted is preaching.
1 Corinthians 1:21	In God’s typical pattern, the unexpected and undervalued activities of the world are the means by which he chooses to save the world.
2 Corinthians 5:20	As Christ’s ambassadors, we represent him. We are the mouthpieces used to speak to the world.
2 Timothy 4:1-2	Not only is it our opportunity to participate in what God does through preaching, we are commanded to do it and do it faithfully.

Indeed we may say that preaching, when it is true preaching, when it is authentic, is the word of God, nothing less.

—John Frame

2. Preaching is dependent on the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:4	The clever use of words to manipulate listeners is not only a waste of time but is trying to use our own power to persuade. Rather, it must be in the power of the Spirit. It is his work, after all, that brings results.
2 Corinthians 3:3-6	The words of God come alive only because the Spirit gives them life. He then writes them on the hearts of the hearers, causing them to become living works of his.

What is meant by ‘unction or anointing of the Spirit?’...It is the Holy Spirit falling upon the preacher in a special manner. It is an access of power. It is God giving power, and enabling, through the Spirit to the preacher in order that he may do this work in a

manner that lifts it beyond the efforts and endeavors of a man to a position in which the preacher is being used by the Spirit and becomes the channel through whom the Spirit works.

—D.M. Lloyd Jones

3. Preaching takes hard work.

- 1 Timothy 5:17 The assumption in this text is that preaching is difficult and it takes hard work to do it well.
- Colossians 1:28-29 Paul describes preaching as a struggle because the aim of preaching is to present the people of God perfect in the end.

In a world which seems either unwilling or unable to listen, how can we be persuaded to go on preaching, and learn to so effectively? The essential secret is not mastering certain techniques but being mastered by certain convictions.

—John Stott

4. Preaching demands authenticity.

- 1 Thessalonians 1:5; 2:11-12 Paul first gives an example of transparency in his own life and then encourages others to be examples worthy to be followed. This is not a show, but a reflection of who we are as authentic followers of Jesus.
- Titus 2:7-8 Our actions must reflect the integrity and honesty of our teaching so that the teaching won't be criticized because of inconsistent living.

...people long to learn from a person who is honest about his struggles and who passionately longs to be spiritually transformed, not “fakey” pastors who wear a fake smile and pretends at a fake relationship with his wife.

—Ron Wheeler

Christ- Centered, Gospel-Transformational Preaching

There are seemingly infinite words used to describe or define the type of preaching one follows. For our purposes, I will use “Christ-centered, gospel-transformational preaching.”

1. Preach Christ and his glory as the gospel.

John 5:39-40 The center or theme of the Scripture is Jesus. This is the climax and culmination of the gospel. There is no good news without Jesus because he is the one and only Savior.

Hebrews 1:3 Jesus Christ—the Son—is the glory (radiance) of God. When we see his face we have seen the face of God. Preaching anything or anyone less is empty and worthless.

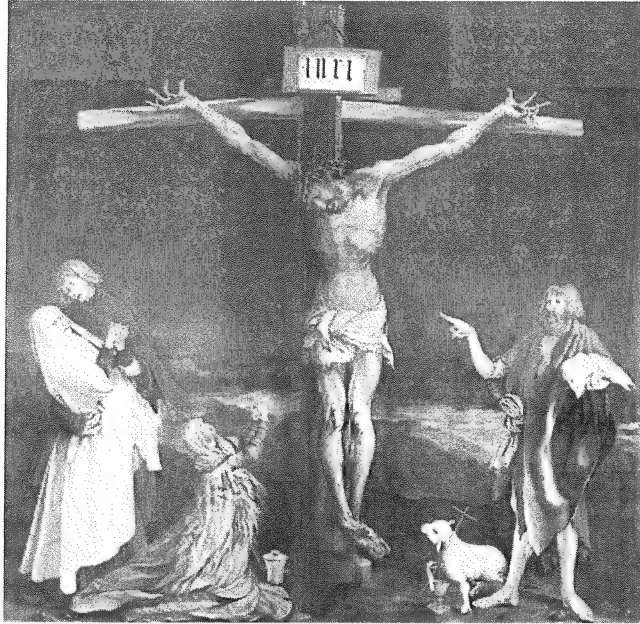
Preach Christ, always and everywhere. He is the whole gospel. His person, offices and work must be our one great, all comprehending theme...

—C.H. Spurgeon

The cross is the pinnacle of God’s love for sinners, not because it demonstrates the value of sinners, but because it vindicates the value of God for sinners to enjoy. God’s love for man does not consist in making man central, but in making himself central for man. The cross does not direct man’s attention to his own vindicated worth, but to God’s vindicated righteousness.

—John Piper

“Praedicatio verbi dei est verbum dei” (The proclamation of the Word of God is the Word of God) Preaching is not a lecture about God and the Bible but to encounter preaching is to encounter God.



Visual Illustration: Painting by German expressionist painter Mathis Grunewald entitled *John the Baptist*. “He must increase but I must decrease.” (John 3:30)

2. Christ is the center of preaching.

<i>Expounding Christ</i>	Christ as Prophet revealing truth	Ask: What does this text say about the person, work, and teaching of Jesus?
<i>Applying Christ</i>	Christ as King commanding obedience	Ask: How is this text calling us to live in light of the King’s work and kingdom ethics in this part of the kingdom?
<i>Adoring Christ</i>	Christ as Priest evoking worship	Ask: How are we experiencing Christ through adoration and rejoicing?

3. The gospel changes the world.

Matthew 28:16-20	In Christ’s commission to preach, the power for life transformation is promised and given. There is no other power to transform a life outside of him.
Colossians 1:27-28	The secret to life is that Christ lives in us—changing us, transforming us, molding us, and empowering us.

Our goal is bringing Christ to the people and bringing the people to Christ. The goal is to change them by the power of the Gospel.

—Jack Miller

Even a stone lying in the sun cannot help but grow warm.”

—Martin Luther

This truth of the gospel is the principle article of all Christian doctrine... Most necessary is it that we know this article well, teach it to others and beat it into their heads continually.

—Martin Luther

4. This gospel comes to us from the biblical text.

- 2 Timothy 3:15-17 We would not know the good news if the Bible itself didn't brings us good news. The Bible is not an end in itself; it is a witness to the end—the truth that Christ, the hope of the world, has come in the flesh to redeem us.
- 1 Timothy 4:13 The means by which we worship is through the public reading and explanation of the Scripture. Without this, we are wandering blindly along a jagged cliff.
- 2 Timothy 4:1-5 The work is telling the good news by being faithful to what the Scripture teaches. Many will come after us who will try to distort the truth and in so doing will blind people to the gospel.

When the Bible speaks, God speaks.

—Augustine

CONVERSATIONS 2-3

SURPRISE ASSIGNMENT!

Assignment

1. I will dismiss one member of the class for 10 minutes.
2. The student may choose any passage from the Bible.
3. After 10 minutes, the student will return to preach his chosen text for 10 minutes.
4. While he is preaching, another member of the class is dismissed to do the same.

Purposes of this Assignment

1. To humble the residents by showing they have much to learn and need to listen during this class.
2. Gauge what type of student the instructor is dealing with and how to adjust the level of the class.
3. To listen for the thinking process of those teaching, which will reveal their presuppositions.
4. Listening to the way the other residents are critiquing the speaker will reveal more than listening to the speakers.
5. To gauge their personal level of interaction with the Bible. If talking about a text of their choice is difficult, they are likely not spending time in the text often enough nor thinking deeply.
6. To inductively teach them the following aspects of sermons:
7. If their time was spent on anything, it should be spent on creating a Big Idea.
8. What did they teach us about God from this text?
9. What did they teach us about ourselves from this text?
10. What did they teach us about the world from this text?

11. Did they apply the text to our minds (thoughts), hearts (feeling/emotions) and wills (actions)?
12. What did the passage reveal about sin and what instruction did it give?
13. What was the gospel from this passage?

NOTE

These simple lessons can be enumerated by the instructor, but they learn more by being tested in an unconventional way. After several students have attempted the Surprise Assignment and failed, others will begin to discover how to improve and look for the basic aspects of the content of a text.

CONVERSATIONS 4-5

THE SUPREMACY OF GOD IN PREACHING

Introduction

1. The first step in the book discussion is to cover student's completion of *A Critical Book Review* in Appendix 1.
2. Most of the time spent on this exercise is in chapter highlights.
3. This is not a practical "how to" type of discussion. Rather, it is theological and philosophical. It is intended to take students to thoughts of God many of them have never had before, showing them how awesome he is and how he is the beginning and end of our preaching.

Reading Review and Discussion

There are always two parts to true worship. There is seeing God and there is savoring God. You can't separate these. You must see him to savor him. And if you don't savor him when you see him, you insult him. In true worship, there is always understanding in the mind and there is always feeling in the heart. (10)

Preaching is a public exultation over the truth that it brings. It is not disinterested or cool or neutral. It is not mere explanation. It is manifestly and contagiously passionate about what it says. (10)

So in a phrase, preaching is expository exultation. (11)

People are starving for the greatness of God. But most of them would not give this diagnosis for their troubled lives. The majesty of God is an unknown cure. (13)

God himself is the necessary subject matter of our preaching, in his majesty and truth and holiness and righteousness and wisdom and faithfulness and sovereignty and grace. And by that I don't mean we shouldn't preach about the nitty-gritty practical things like parenthood and divorce and AIDS and gluttony and television and sex. What I mean is that every one of those things should be swept right up into the holy presence of God and laid bare to the roots of its Godwardness or godlessness. (15)

Spurgeon was asked about the secret of his ministry. After a moment's pause Mr. Spurgeon said, "My people pray for me." (17)

Discussion Question Set 1

1. How is preaching Trinitarian in nature? (23)
2. What is the goal of preaching? (32)
3. What are the two massive obstacles to the attainment of this goal? (32)
4. What is the answer to these obstacles? (33)
5. Discuss the biblical evidence for this answer. (33-39)

How utterly dependent we are on the Holy Spirit in the work of preaching! All genuine preaching is rooted in a feeling of desperation. (41)

Discussion Question Set 2

1. Read and Discuss: 1 Corinthians 2:1-3; 2 Corinthians 1:8-9; 12:7.
2. In relying on the gift of the Spirit's word (the Bible), Piper makes the point that it must be done in an "explicit manner." Discuss his claims on pages 44-45.
3. Discuss APTAT (47-48)
4. What is a "gravity of spirit," and what are the marks? (53-54)
5. How do gladness and gravity go together? (55) *Consider Hebrews 13:17*

Gravity in preaching is appropriate because preaching is God's appointed means for the conversion of sinners, the awakening of the church and the preservation of the saints. (58)

This is simply stupendous to think about-that when I preach, the everlasting destiny of sinners hangs in the balance! If a person is not made earnest and grave by this fact, people will unconsciously learn that the realities of heaven and hell are not serious. (59)

Discussion Question Set 3

1. Discuss Piper's take on laughter from the pulpit. (59)
2. Discuss the statement "Eternal security is a community project." (62)
3. Discuss the 7 practical steps of combining gravity and gladness in preaching. (63-66)
4. How is every sermon a salvation sermon? (81)
5. Piper summarizes Edward's preaching in 10 characteristics. Name each and discuss their importance. (83-105)

CONVERSATION 6

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

If the gospel is at the center of everything we do, what is it and how do we apply it?

This session will closely examine 1 Corinthians 15 before discussing it from a theological perspective of Luke 15.³

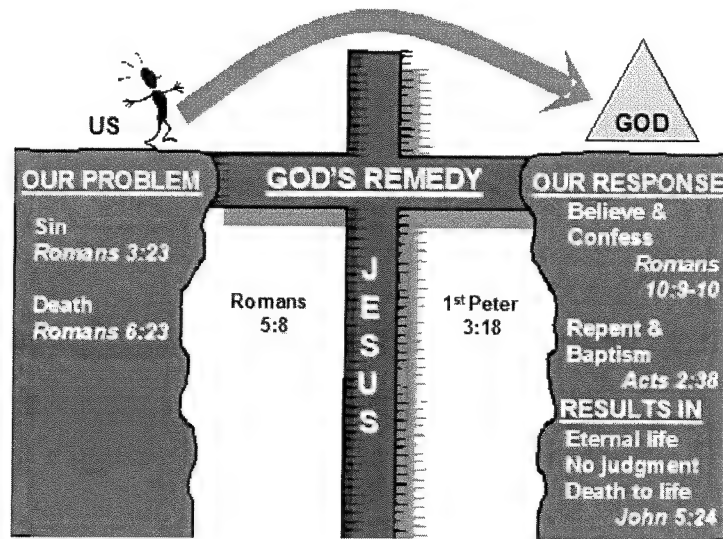
Introduction: Word Association

This exercise usually provides what our default thinking is concerning a subject.

1. Milk
2. Florida Gators
3. Job
4. Mom
5. Gospel
6. Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-19: call out words/phrases that describe the gospel.

³ CONVERSATIONS 6-7 are combinations and adaptations of 3 sources: D. A. Carson, "What is the Gospel?" (lecture at The Gospel Coalition Conference June, 2007); Timothy Keller "Gospel Centered Ministry" (lecture at The Gospel Coalition June, 2007); Steve Childers, "The Radical Grace of God in the Gospel: The Whole Gospel for the Whole Person!" *Faithful and Fruitful* (August 2012) <http://www.faithfulandfruitful.com/the-radical-grace-of-god-in-the-gospel/> (accessed July 30, 2014).

Most of us understand the gospel as a simple concept like “The Gospel Bridge.”



The problem is that to view this interpretation as a fair representation of the gospel is to truncate it, making it small and manageable, because it is only about getting in. Rather, we need a larger understanding of the gospel.

The gospel is at the center of everything we do, and it must be at the center of our preaching. If it is displaced by any other philosophy of transformation, such as self-help techniques, then preaching ceases to be Christian in nature. At that point, it has been cut off at the knees from any authority and possibility of change. That is why we must be thoroughly familiar with the content of the gospel and how it works to transform us.

The Nature of the Gospel ⁴

The nature of the gospel must be clearly understood before it can be properly communicated. This section examines 1 Corinthians 15 and its strong presentation of the nature of the gospel. At the end of each section, some implications for preaching are identified.

1. The Gospel is Historical

1 Corinthians 15:1-8

Let me now remind you, dear brothers and sisters, of the Good News I preached to you before. You welcomed it then, and you still stand firm in it. 2 It is this Good News that saves you if you continue to believe the message I told you—unless, of course, you believed something that was never true in the first place. 3 I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. 4 He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. 5 He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. 6 After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. 7 Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles. 8 Last of all, as though I had been born at the wrong time, I also saw him.

The gospel is good news, not good advice. Advice is counsel about how one should do something that has not yet happened. News is about something that has already happened. If a king defeats an invading army, he sends back *messengers* (heralders,

⁴ CONVERSATIONS 6-7 are combinations and adaptations of 3 sources: D. A. Carson, "What is the Gospel?" (lecture at The Gospel Coalition Conference June, 2007); Timothy Keller "Gospel Centered Ministry" (lecture at The Gospel Coalition June, 2007); Steve Childers, "The Radical Grace of God in the Gospel: The Whole Gospel for the Whole Person!" *Faithful and Fruitful* (August 2012) <http://www.faithfulandfruitful.com/the-radical-grace-of-god-in-the-gospel/> (accessed July 30, 2014).

good-newsmen) who bring a report such as, “Respond with joy and live in peace because the defeat has happened.” Every other religion sends military *advisors* which give the equivalent of rites, rituals, or laws so that the people can fight for their lives. One is a response of *joy* while the other is a response of *fear*, trying to keep the regulations and restrictions correctly. The deceiving part is they appear similar, but in reality they are opposites in what they say and what they produce.

1 Corinthians 15 specifies the historical nature of Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection. All are tied together, and any approach that attempts to pit them against one another is another gospel. The manner in which we access the events of Jesus’s death, burial, and resurrection is the same as we have with any historical event—the living witness and writings of those who were present at the events. This is why it is vital for us to know that the witnesses of Scripture are the ones who are passing along the message of the gospel.

The claims of Christianity are irreducibly historical. Unlike most other religions, the historical uniqueness of Christ is a non-negotiable for our faith. The historicity of Jesus is not only that he existed as a man, but also that the historical claims of his death, burial, and resurrection for our sins truly happened in time and space. This is God’s revelation to us. Not that that God gave a deposit of truth to Jesus who then passed it on to us, but that Jesus is the revelation of God to us. He is the Good News. When 1 Corinthians posits this gospel as true, it is not in some sense “true” because it is meaningful and may accomplish something in us. It is true because these are truths of history. The word “historical” is sometimes used differently depending upon the

agenda. One way of interpreting this word is to say that it is only historical if it can be located in natural things. The problem with this definition is that it endeavors to exclude miracles. We know miracles happened because of the historical record of the Scripture. Christianity insists that events are historical, whether they defy natural causes or are caused by God's supernatural intervention in operating history. The test is not the narrowly defined term of history but the record that has been passed down to us.

Preaching Implication

Words are required to explain and expound historical events. Teaching someone how to do something may, and often does, require modeling for the learner. However, gospel-centered preaching requires declarative preaching of historical events of which we have a trusted record. Historical events in and of themselves are not transformative, as if as soon as we admit their credibility they turn magical. Rather, we must preach them as though they are *true* and *trustworthy*. *True* in that they actually occurred. *Trustworthy* in that these events point to something worth leaning upon and giving our lives to.

2. The Gospel is Biblical

1 Corinthians 15:3-8

"...according to the Scriptures..."

The key to understanding the historicity of the Good News is to understand that the Bible has been passed down to us through the centuries in a trustworthy manner.

Preservation is just as much a miracle as inspiration because after thousands of years of transmission of the Scripture from copy to copy, language to language, and surviving attempt after attempt to destroy it, it still stands. "According to the Scripture" is our standard of practice.

Preaching Implication

The Bible is our basis and isn't merely a historical book, though it does contain history. It is altogether in its own category. We can use critical methods to show standards that it meets, but it cannot be judged solely on those standards because it would then be subject to the standards. The standards cannot have more authority than the Scripture itself. The "inspiration stamp" bears witness to the truth, and it is the basis upon which we preach. The Bible is not life itself. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, and the Scripture points away from itself to Jesus who gives life. When preaching ends or even (if we dare say) overemphasizes Scripture, we have entered into bibliolatry, and we worship something other than Jesus. This does not diminish the Bible in any way. Quite the opposite. It actually enhances its nature because it emphasizes the true nature of Scripture as the *witness to life* found only in Jesus Christ.

3. The Gospel is Apostolic

1 Corinthians 15:11

“So it makes no difference whether I preach or they preach, for we all preach the same message you have already believed.”

Notice the sequence of pronouns Paul uses. “I,” an Apostle, preach. “They,” the Apostles (plural), preach. “We all,” the Apostles (plural inclusive) preach the same message and this “you” have believed. “I,” “they,” “we,” and “you.” This points to the passing down of historic truth from personal, firsthand witnesses of the life of Jesus. The gospel comes through these witnesses.

Preaching Implication

We stand on the shoulders of reliable witnesses with whom we participate in the gospel and the story of the mission of redemption. Our trustworthiness rests on their shoulders. It is incumbent upon us to be genuine, honest, transparent, and as reliable as we possibly can. However, it is ultimately up to the Spirit to authenticate the message that we have received from reliable witnesses. This is both humbling and relieving. It is humbling because we realize we are only one piece of the puzzle and usually a small piece at that. It is relieving because we realize that the full responsibility of convincing and convicting is not up to us.

4. The Gospel is Theological

1 Corinthians 15

- *God* raised Christ Jesus from the dead.
- *God's* purpose was for Christ to die and rise. And not mere death, but that he dies for our sins, and rises for our justification.
- *God's* wrath is against our sin, and our sin is personal.
- *God* pronounces the sentence of death against sin.
- *God* is the one whom we have offended, who must be appeased. And what makes God most angry is idolatry, the “de-godding” of God, the putting of something else in God’s place. God is still jealous. Repentance is necessary because the coming of the king brings judgment as well as blessing.

Preaching Implication

Preaching is theological work. Theology is the understanding of who God is, what he has done, why he has done it, what he is doing now, and how he is doing it. All of Scripture functions as a window through which we look to understand God’s nature. There are indicatives as well as imperatives in Scripture.

5. The Gospel is Christological

1 Corinthians 15

“Christ” is used repeatedly throughout the chapter. Jesus is the only name by which we can be saved. Jesus alone reconciles us to God. The gospel is not preached if Christ

is not preached - both the person and work of Christ - which includes his atoning death and resurrection. Jesus gave an advanced hermeneutics and homiletics seminar when talking with the two travelers on the road to Emmaus. Everything in the Old Testament points to him, and the result of the seminar was their testimony.

Luke 24:32

They said to each other, "Didn't our hearts burn within us as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?"

Everything since in the New Testament points to him as well. Sinclair Ferguson puts it this way in his pamphlet entitled *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament*:

Most people not only don't preach Christ in the OT, but not in the NT either. The Bible is mainly about Him, not about you:

Jesus is the true and better Adam who passed the test in the garden and whose obedience is imputed to us.

Jesus is the true and better Abel who, though innocently slain, has blood now that cries out, not for our condemnation, but for acquittal.

Jesus is the true and better Abraham who answered the call of God to leave all the comfortable and familiar and go out into the void not knowing wither he went to create a new people of God.

Jesus is the true and better Isaac who was not just offered up by his father on the mount but was truly sacrificed for us. And when God said to Abraham, "Now I know you love me because you did not withhold your son, your only son whom you love from me," now we can look at God taking his son up the mountain and sacrificing him and say, "Now we know that you love us because you did not withhold your son, your only son, whom you love from us." Jesus is the true and better Jacob who wrestled and took the blow of justice we deserved, so we, like Jacob, only receive the wounds of grace to wake us up and discipline us.

Jesus is the true and better Joseph who, at the right hand of the king, forgives those who betrayed and sold him and uses his new power to save them.

Jesus is the true and better Moses who stands in the gap between the people and the Lord and who mediates a new covenant.

Jesus is the true and better Rock of Moses who, struck with the rod of God's justice, now gives us water in the desert.

Jesus is the true and better Job, the truly innocent sufferer, who then intercedes for and saves his stupid friends.

Jesus is the true and better David whose victory becomes his people's victory, though they never lifted a stone to accomplish it themselves.

Jesus is the true and better Esther who didn't just risk leaving an earthly palace but lost the ultimate and heavenly one, who didn't just risk his life, but gave his life to save his people.

Jesus is the true and better Jonah who was cast out into the storm so that we could be brought in.

Jesus is the real Rock of Moses, the real Passover Lamb, innocent, perfect, helpless, slain so the angel of death will pass over us. He's the true temple, the true prophet, the true priest, the true king, the true sacrifice, the true lamb, the true light, the true bread.

The Bible's really not about us—it's about him.⁵

Preaching Implication

If the sermon does not somehow find its center, foundation, or force in Jesus then can it truly be called Christian? Many sermons in Protestant churches could be preached in synagogues or on a self-help TV special because they do not put Christ at the center of the Good News. He must be preached as the redeeming rescuer of us all.

⁵ Timothy Keller, "Preaching to the Heart" (lecture series delivered at Ockenga Institute of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, Massachusetts, 2006).

6. The Gospel is Personal

1 Corinthians 15:

(Notice the use of the personal pronoun “you.”)

Though the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ are historical events and theological truths by which we live, they are not impersonal, abstract facts. Rather, they establish personal salvation for all who believe by faith can experience. Each of us must understand the debt of sin we owe, the magnitude of the provision paid on our behalf, and that we are only acceptable because Jesus lived the life that we should have lived. We have a personal Savior (not privatized or individualized) who redeems people to live in community (not corporatized but corporate) with one another.

Preaching Implication

The gospel is for individuals, but it is not individualistic. This means we have to work hard not to present the gospel for consumption; it is something in which we participate through Christ. Privatized faith, where no one else has a say in one's life, is not presented in Scripture. We are saved in community and for community, but it is not an impersonal transformation. I know him, and I am known by him. He knows my thoughts before I think them and my words before I speak them.

Our preaching must also be accessible to different types of learners and listeners because that is one of the ways the gospel penetrates the hearts of the hearers. In the

same way he has given us different genres of Scripture by which to know and identify with him, so we need to be careful to appeal widely to the needs of the hearer.

7. The Gospel is Communal/Corporate

1 Corinthians 15

(The personal pronoun “you” is plural.)

When the gospel is being addressed in Scripture, “you” is almost always plural. This means it is addressed to a community of people who live together, work together, eat and drink together, suffer loss together, celebrate victory together, mourn together, and worship together. *Ecclesia* is community. We are never saved to ourselves, but to the good of a community. We are now free to give our lives away to each other rather than taking every effort possible to keep them for ourselves. Hearing and participating in truth happens most often in community.

Preaching Implication

Because of the communal nature of our faith, we must make both corporate applications and individual applications. No one lives and dies to themselves, so even applications for individuals are for the good of the many. The entire Christian life and mission of the gospel is not up to any one individual. The Good News is that it is meant for a community to participate in and fulfill together.

8. The Gospel is Exclusive

1 Corinthians 15:21-22

So you see, just as death came into the world through a man, now the resurrection from the dead has begun through another man. Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life.

Sin and death are universal because we came from one man—Adam, our first father.

There is no exclusivity to the inheritance we receive from him. No one is left out of the will as a shunned member of the family; all are included. Yet, there is hope through another man, Jesus Christ who has come to bring us new life so that we are not left helpless. The differences between these two Adams are great and to be expounded on further in this chapter and in Romans 5:12-21. The point Paul is making in verses 21-22 is exclusivity in Christ that is twofold. First, Christ is the only source for new life. There is no other option or alternative. There is hope, of that we are sure, but it can only be found in Christ. Second, only those who belong to Christ receive life. This exclusivity is not limited to those of a certain race, language, socioeconomic class, or any other such factor. Belonging denotes identification with, submission to, being owned by, living for, trusting in, being accepted by, and accepting Christ as the way, truth, and the life in order to receive life.

Preaching Implication

There is much debate in regards to the exclusivity versus the universality of the gospel. Yet, it must be clear that preaching a cure to our hearers must be exclusive to

Christ. We can offer no other solution for our sinful and terminal inheritance. If we offer another, we offer false hope, and thereby sentence our hearers to remain under the curse. There is no hope outside of Christ. This infuses us with passion because we know the urgency by which we speak. Undoubtedly there are some who are looking to something or someone else as their functional savior every time we preach. We can passionately give them hope. This truth also gives us confidence of a sure hope. Doubt is vanquished and hope remains when people receive Christ. Christ must be offered as the hope and people must respond to participate in life.

9. The Gospel is Universal

1 Corinthians 15:23

But there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised as the first of the harvest; then all who belong to Christ will be raised when he comes back.

The gospel is a comprehensive vision of a new humanity drawn from every tribe and nation. It is not universal in the sense that it includes everyone without exception, but it is universal in the sense that it is for all who belong to Christ, regardless of any ethnic or socio-economic groups to which they may belong. Most of the world's fighting throughout history has been over nationality, race, or class. The gospel is countercultural in that it cuts right through these divisive differences and animosities. It also means that there is no type of person or sinner of any extreme who is beyond the reach of the gospel. It truly is the only universal, unifying truth. Everyone who belongs is given new life and everyone is welcome.

Preaching Implication

Lines of belief and disbelief must be drawn in our preaching to encourage movement by the hearer. Yet we are free to call everyone who would take the life of Christ as their own. This means proactively reaching to those alike and not like us. It means strategizing in our preaching to show how the gospel is for all types of people, with all types of maladies and all types of histories. No one is beyond the reach of the gospel and preaching is no respecter of persons. All of us are under the curse of Adam, all of us can be freed from this curse, and all of us can experience this new life.

10. The Gospel is Transformational

1 Corinthians 15:17, 20, 34, 57-58

And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins. (17)

But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. (28)

Think carefully about what is right, and stop sinning. For to your shame I say that some of you don't know God at all. (38)

But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ. So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless. (57-58)

Just as Christ was transformed from death to life in the resurrection, so we will be transformed. But the implications of the resurrection are not limited to the future, as if that was a limitation at all. Rather, the future speaks to our faith, hope, and forgiveness of sins in the present. Jesus' resurrection is the deposit, or guarantee, of a secure future

and that future pulls us forward to living a certain way in the present. The gospel never leaves anyone the same, but massively transforms everything about us—internally, externally, presently, and our futures.

Preaching Implication

Our faith is not a “grit our teeth and bear it in the present until we make it to heaven” type of faith. It is not about letting the present be drowned in the future any more than the future being drowned in the present. Often, we tend to polarize in our preaching. Either we are too focused on the future, or we are too focused on the present. Rather, everything about the Christian faith is about our transformation in small ways in the present and significant ways in the future. Preaching transformation is neither license nor law, but instead heartfelt transformation because Jesus was resurrected in the past and we will be one day in the future. At times, this transformation comes by strong confrontation, while at others, it is through words of gentle comfort.

11. The Gospel is Cultural

1 Corinthians 15:58

So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless.

Paul calls his new friends “brothers and sisters,” signifying a new people formed around the gospel. They are not all culturally bound together, but they are bound together in Christ and in the work that he has called them to do. There are at least two ways the gospel is cultural. First, it communicates across cultures, and because this, it is true, and it is for all cultures.

When the veil was torn in the Holy of Holies, it was a sign that there was no longer a cultural salvation limited to Israel only. The gospel goes to all people, emphasized in the Great Commission. Second, it does not create a monolithic or formulaic culture. The gospel is far more powerful and creative than that. Rather, it redeems culture and creates a new counterculture inside of every culture. It takes the culture and its practices, showing how they have longed for a Savior and even pointed to God through their indigenous practices. In redeeming it, the culture becomes a new counterculture, worshipping God in its own uniqueness.

However, the gospel goes further than that by creating a new culture—the church. The church embodies various cultural expressions that are not a sign of disunity in the church. The beauty of the church is her unity *in* diversity. She is unified *around* Christ and diversified *in* worship and living. On one hand, we must always be aware of the dangers of cultural accommodation. On the other hand, we must be aware of withdrawal or isolation. Our light is dim if we are hidden by assuming the culture or by separating ourselves too much from it. The gospel invades the culture, turning the church into a city on a hill.

Preaching Implication

Preaching must always be aware of the culture around it. This begins at the most basic of levels such as language and stylistic markers. It grows even more effective as current events are addressed and interpreted in light of the gospel. Then, it moves into realms of culture to create something new—arts and entertainment, business, education, family, media, and government. Preaching speaks to cultural transformation in clear ways, rather than encouraging accommodation or withdrawal.

12. The Gospel is Doxological

1 Corinthians 15:56-57

For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.

As Paul's epic chapter draws to a close, he shifts from recounting history and gives vital information, offering rigorous argumentation to doxology—worship! Doxology is the basis of the entire Christian life. The first commandment is, "You must have no other God's before me."

Martin Luther in his *Larger Catechism* calls this commandment the chief of them because it summarizes all the rest. The reason he says this is because underneath every sin is an idol that has taken hold of our hearts. When we sin we twist anything into something ultimate, and we are willing to do whatever it takes to have or experience it. When idols are anything but God, they lead us away from him. In doing so, we are pursuing justification for living. For example, when we lie, we do so for some greater

purpose—because it will get us something that we think will ultimately fulfill us. When we covet, we do so because that item holds promise for a heart that endlessly desires. Thus, we have created an idol or god that we desire to obtain. The reason we do this is because we worship it, and the only way to change is to worship.

Preaching Implication

When preaching itself is worship (it makes much of God), then the response of the people will be obedient worship with their mouths, hearts, minds, and lives. Jonathan Edwards emphasized that the purpose of preaching is not just to make things clear, but to make them real or vivid. The heart is one's core commitments, which capture our imagination. So then, the first and primary object of preaching is not merely to give information, but to impress the whole person in such a way that they are compelled to respond in worship, both in that moment and in the days that follow. When we worship God rightly, based upon truth we have discovered, we are transformed into a worshipping people who then live out the truth (that God has given us victory), and the first commandment becomes a part of the fabric of our lives.

CONVERSATION 7

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL? (CONT.)

Definition

God has entered the world in Jesus Christ, who through his person and work, achieves and accomplishes salvation from sin and judgment on our behalf. We could not achieve this for ourselves. Currently, this salvific work converts and transforms individuals, forming them into a new humanity. Eventually, it will renew the whole world and all creation, in which we will enjoy him forever. This is the 'Good News'—the gospel.

Threefold Good News

Doctrine: The gospel is the good news of gracious acceptance.

1. Problem: We are more sinful than we can imagine. So, there has to be some way we can be reconciled to God.
2. The Prodigal Son story in Luke 15 illustrates two enemies of the gospel or ways people try to deal with truth:
 - The Younger Brother is lost, alienated from the Father by being very, very bad. He doesn't care about his father; he only wants his things/possessions and runs FAR AWAY from him. Because he is very bad, he is lost and the father has to come out to restore him.
 - **Irreligion:** I am saved, or have value; my life is justified by doing whatever I want. I'm my own judge and happiness, satisfaction, and acceptance come from living any way I want.
 - The Older Brother is also lost. He is alienated from the father by being very, very good. He too doesn't care about the father but only wants his possessions—his inheritance, a calf, a party thrown for him—and the father has to come out to restore him.

- **Religion:** In religion we try our best to appease the god we are worshipping and we are accepted by how well we do in that religion. It is about performance.
- **Moralism** (which is what most religions teach) is about being good on our own merit, character, or virtue.

3. What is the Solution: How is the gospel different from irreligion and religion?

Jesus lived the life we should live, perfectly. He also paid the penalty we owe for the rebellious life we do live. He did this in our place, overcame death, and presents us before the Father (Isaiah 53:4-10; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Mark 10:45).

- **Irreligion:** Instead of saying God accepts me for who I am, we say God accepts me because of Christ.
- **Religion:** Religion operates on the principle: "I obey, therefore I am accepted." The gospel operates on the principle: "I am accepted through Christ, therefore I obey."
- Christians trust in Christ for their acceptance with God, rather than in their own moral character, commitment, or performance.

4. *simul iustus et peccator*: simultaneously sinful, yet accepted.

5. Answer: "We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope."

6. Summary: *Doctrine* looks to a text to see how it supports sound doctrine. It stresses the objective, historic work of Christ that Jesus really came in time, space, and history to accomplish all for us. It will talk much more about the real, historicity of Jesus life, death and resurrection.

- **Example:** This view thinks that the problem addressed by Paul in Galatians was a doctrinal heresy.

Personal/Pietist: The gospel is the good news of changed lives (gospel of sonship).

1. Paul says to Christians, *“your life is hid with Christ in God”* (Col 3:3), and in numerous places he says that we are now *“in Him”* (Ephesians 1-2).
2. This means:
 - On the one hand, the Father accepts us in Christ and treats us as if we had done all that Jesus has done (cf. Col 3:2a).
 - But this also means Christ’s life comes into us by the Spirit and shapes us into a new kind of person.
 - The gospel is not just a truth about us that we affirm with our minds, it is also a reality we must experience in our hearts and souls.
 - We need the gospel as much to day on this side of salvation/conversion as we did the day we were converted.
 - **Illustration (Gospel Mansion):** An endless mansion where conversion is only the door we enter. The rest of life is wandering into room after room experiencing new beauties and pleasures of the gospel.
 - 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 (Paul wants the people to give an offering to the poor.) *“I don’t want to order you. I don’t want this offering to simply be the response to my demand.”* He doesn’t put pressure directly on the will saying, *“I’m an apostle and this is your duty to me,”* nor does he put pressure directly on the emotions—telling them stories about how much the poor are suffering and how much more they have than the sufferers. Instead, Paul vividly and unforgettably says, *“You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich”* (2 Corinthians 8:9).
 - Hearts are idol factories for the motivations of what we do and why we do it.
 - **Example:** Lying.
 - Faith in the gospel restructures our motivations, our self-understanding and identity, and our view of the world. Behavioral compliance to rules without heart-change will be superficial and fleeting. The gospel changes your heart.
 - **Summary:** Personal/pietist looks at the text as it relates to people devotionally. It stresses our new identity in Christ as adopted children,

liberated from sin and the law, renewing what is broken in our lives. The text is applied to answer the following questions: how does this help us relate to the Lord? How does it help our prayer life? How does it show us how to live in the world? How does this help the non-believer find Christ? How does this help me handle my personal problems?

- **Example:** This view thinks that the problem addressed by Paul in Galatians was a pastoral one of Christians falling back into legalism.

Cultural/Social Transformation: The gospel is the good news of the new world coming (gospel of the Kingdom of God).

- The plotline of the Bible:
 - God created the world
 - The world and humanity fell into sin and decay
 - But God sends his Son to redeem the world and create a new humanity and...
 - Eventually the whole world will be renewed. Death, decay, injustice, and suffering will be all removed.
- The gospel then is not just about individual happiness and fulfillment. It is not **just** a wonderful plan for my life but a wonderful plan for the world. It is about the coming of God's kingdom to renew everything.
- **Example:** Matthew 6 The Lord's Prayer.
- **Reversal of the Present World through Kingdom Values**

Gospel-centered churches not only urge individuals to be converted, but they also seek peace and justice in our cities and in our world. Christ wins our salvation through losing, achieves power through weakness and service, and comes to wealth by giving all away. Those who receive his salvation are not the strong and accomplished but those who admit they are weak and lost. This pattern creates an 'alternate kingdom' or 'city' (Matthew 5:14-16) in which there is a complete reversal of the values of the world in regards to power, recognition, status, and wealth.

When we understand that we are saved by sheer grace through Christ the gospel creates a people with a whole alternate way of being human.⁶

- **Summary:** Cultural/Social Transformation looks at the text as it relates to corporate and cultural issues, such as social justice and economic fairness and Christian community building. It stresses the reversal of values in the new creation. It will talk about healed community, cultural transformation, ministry of deed and justice. The great reversal of the cross means that the gospel proclaims a complete reversal of the values of world power, recognition, status, wealth, sex, etc. For example, the gospel is especially welcomed by the poor and for the poor: "*He has anointed me... to preach the gospel to the poor.*" (Luke 4:18, cf. Luke 7:22). Preaching the gospel and healing people's bodies are closely associated (Luke 9:6). Jesus points to the coming kingdom of God, which will renew all of creation. The gospel creates a people with a whole alternate way of being human. Racial and class superiority, accrual of money and power at the expense of others, yearning for popularity and recognition—all these things are marks of living in the world, and are the opposite mindset of the kingdom (Luke 6:20-26).
- **Example:** This view thinks that the problem addressed by Paul in Galatians was the lack of table fellowship between Jew and Gentile.

O.T. and N.T. Examples

(Seeing all three perspectives in one text)

Genesis 18:16-33

This is the account of Abraham praying for Sodom and Lot's family.

1. **Doctrine:** It points out that Abraham is looking for a new kind of righteousness. It was clear that the sin of the few could transfer and bring many into condemnation. (This is why whole families were destroyed for the sin of one or two members). Yet, Abraham is asking if it could work the other way. Would it be possible that the righteousness of a few could be transferred to the many for acquittal? God's answer is positive! So Abraham points us toward our acquittal in Christ, when Christ's righteousness covers us despite our sin and leads to our pardon.

⁶ Timothy Keller, "The Gospel – The Key to Change." Orlando: CRU Press.

2. **Personal:** Notice, however, Abraham's prayer. The prayer of Abraham is bold yet humble, specific, passionate, and persistent. Here we have a wonderful model for our prayer lives. We should follow it.
3. **Cultural:** Abraham is not simply praying for Lot's family. He is also praying that God might have mercy on a very wicked, pagan city. He is praying that God would spare Sodom itself! So here we have a model for believers to seek God for the peace of even unbelieving cities.

Matthew 8:1-4 (Luke 5:12-14; Mark 1:40-44)

This is the story of the healing of the leper, which comes at the beginning of Jesus' ministry in the synoptic gospels.

1. **Doctrine:** The passage teaches us about Jesus and the ceremonial law. Jesus both breaks the law (by touching the leper and then by not going himself to become ritually clean) and yet honors it (by telling the man to go to the priest.) Jesus is the fulfillment of the ceremonial law. In him we are cleansed and justified. Now that he has come, the OT ceremonial law does not bind us.
2. **Personal:** However, notice the love of Jesus in touching the leper. Jesus is the caring one who does not simply heal the body, but who wants to heal emotionally—to touch a man who has not experienced human contact. Also, Jesus exemplifies the tension in our lives in the world. We are not to withdraw from the world to avoid pollution—we must reach out and be engaged with the world. Yet, we must not let them be agents for our pollution; instead, we must be agents for their cleansing. A hard task!
3. **Cultural:** This focuses on the fact that the leprosy was a social status, not just a disease. Lepers were marginalized economically, politically, and socially. Jesus is incorporating a marginalized person back into the community. That is why he tells him to go to a priest and prove his cleansing.

CONVERSATIONS 8-9

SPIRIT-LED PREACHING

Introduction

1. The first step in discussion of the book is to cover student's completion of *A Critical Book Review* in Appendix 1.
2. Most of the time spent on this exercise is in chapter highlights.
3. This is not a practical "how to" type of discussion. Rather, it is theological and philosophical. It is intended to take students to thoughts of God many of them have never had before, showing them how awesome he is and how he is the beginning.

Reading Review and Discussion

I do not believe the reformation of Christian preaching, specifically expository preaching, is complete. In addition to a strong emphasis on the text of Scripture, we must place an equally strong emphasis on the Holy Spirit who empowers us to preach the Scriptures.
(XV)

The recovery of the Holy Spirit's role in expository preaching will enrich and empower our preaching and our churches. Not only will students and practitioners of preaching understand the mechanics of the text, but they will also be conversant and experienced in the dynamics of the Spirit. Instead of only hearing, "The text, the text, the text," in their homiletic classrooms, they will start hearing, "The text and the Spirit of God." (XVI)

As preachers, we are quick to confess the need for the Spirit's power in our preaching but we fall short when it comes to explaining how to involve the Holy Spirit in our preaching.
(3)

Discussion Question Set 1

1. Read and discuss 1 Corinthians 2:1-4, 3:5, and 2 Corinthians 12:9.
2. Discuss the *Ten Ways the Holy Spirit Is at Work in Preaching* on page 4.
3. What is "cardinal rule number one" on page 9? How does the author challenge those preparing to preach?

4. Read and discuss the first paragraphs at the top of page 10.

In general, preaching definitions tend to center on the preacher, the Bible and the delivery. (11)

Discussion Question Set 2

1. The author then gives three reasons for why he thinks this is true. What are they and do you think they are legitimate?
2. Discuss the two models the author gives in regards to what drives the sermon on pages 18-19.
3. Read and discuss the proposed definition of *expository preaching* on page 21ff.
4. How is the Spirit involved in Christ's preaching? (27-28)
5. Discuss Paul's theology of preaching on pages 29-37.
6. What is the difference between *inspiration* and *illumination*? What are the implications of the Spirit's illumination? (Chapter 4)

In Spirit-Led Preaching the dynamics of preaching must be viewed on equal footing with the mechanics of preaching. (77)

Question Discussion Set 3

1. The section on *Character and Humility* on pages 86-87 is excellent. Read out loud together.
2. What are the *Keys to Internalizing the Message* on pages 98-100?

What method of sermon deliver best fits Spirit-led preaching? ...the sovereign Spirit of God works with a variety of delivery styles and uses those styles to proclaim truth through us. (102)

Question Discussion Set 4

1. What is *indeterminacy* and why is it worth being familiar with the factors involved? (106-108)
2. Read "A Preacher's Prayer." (113) Every preacher should write their own.
3. Discuss the differences between empowerment and anointing in chapter 9. Notice the characteristics, hindrances, and helps of the Spirit's empowerment.

CONVERSATIONS 10-11

AUDIO/VIDEO SERMON EVALUATIONS

Activity: The class will listen and watch three sermons by three different preachers. The class will compare and contrast the different speakers and their sermons:

- Tim Keller: Luke 15. This represents a deductive, cerebral sermon.
- Ray Cortese: Luke 19. This represents an inductive, blended sermon.
- Eugene Lowery: Matthew 18. This represents a narrative sermon.

Evaluation: How to evaluate a sermon.

- Introduction/Body/Conclusion
- Use of text
- Form of sermon
- Presentation of gospel
- Delivery style
- Context of sermon
- Overall effectiveness

CONVERSATIONS 12-14

BIBLICAL PREACHING

CHAPTERS 1-4

Reading Review and Discussion

Chapter 1

- What are the reasons for the devaluing of preaching?
- Why is preaching THE event through which God works? Give Scriptural evidence.
- Why is expository preaching needed?
- What are the 5 aspects that make up the definition of preaching? List them and formulate a guiding question for each that will help you remember the meaning of these aspects.

Chapter 2

- How many ideas should a sermon have? What image is used to demonstrate this?
- Why is the answer to the previous question so important?
- What is an idea?
- What are the two essential elements of an idea and what question does each of them ask?

Chapter 3

- What is the most important factor in determining how to accomplish Stage 1?

- What are the two problems facing topical exposition? Can topical preaching be expositional? Why?
- What are the factors needed to determine proper sermon length?
- What must you always be looking for while studying a text? What two questions help you arrive at that conclusion?
- After completing Stage 3, what two things must you be able to do?

Chapter 4

- Create a detailed outline of this chapter.
- Write out a list of questions that you need answered after reading and outlining this chapter.

Exercises

Chapter 2

Complete Exercise questions 1-10 in chapter 2, "What's the Big Idea?" pages 47-50 during class.

Chapter 4

Complete Exercise questions 1-9 in chapter 4, "The Road from Text to Sermon" pages 97-100 during class.

CONVERSATIONS 15-17

BIBLICAL PREACHING

CHAPTERS 5-8

Reading Review and Discussion

Chapter 5

- After the author reviews the 3 developmental questions on pgs. 102-103, what became clear that was not clear to you before? What new questions came to mind?
- What are the 4 principles to keep in mind when framing a homiletical idea?
- What is the most obvious shift from an exegetical idea to a homiletical idea?
- What is the difference between an essay and a sermon? Is this a minor or major difference?
- How do you discover the purpose of a sermon?
- What 3 things does the purpose statement of a sermon do?

Chapter 6

- Where is the big idea stated in a deductive sermon? Semi-inductive sermon? Inductive sermon? What one word would you use to describe each of these forms? Which of these forms have you heard the most? Which one of these are you most interested in learning how to use?
- What are the 4 benefits of creating a sermon outline?
- List at least 5 suggestions the author makes concerning outlining a sermon.

Chapter 7

- What are the 5 functions of supporting material?
- How is restatement different from repetition?
- What are the 4 ways to *define and explain*?
- Why do we use quotations? What types of people are more and less impressed with quotations?
- What is narration in a sermon?
- What functions (9) do illustrations perform?
- List, from most effective to least effective, the categories of illustrations.

Chapter 8

- What are the 4 characteristics of effective introductions? Explain why it is vital to include each of these characteristics in introductions.
- What is the purpose of conclusions?
- Place the 7 ways of concluding a sermon in the order you think they are most effective.
- What are the 3 pieces of advice the author gives toward the end of the chapter in regard to conclusions?

Exercises

Write the Subject, Compliment, Fallen Condition Focus and Gospel Answer for each text:

John 3:1-21

- Subject:
- Compliment:
- FCF:
- Gospel Answer:

Romans 6:1-17

- Subject:
- Compliment:
- FCF:
- Gospel Answer:

Luke 10:25-37

- Subject:
- Compliment:
- FCF:
- Gospel Answer:

Psalm 51

- Subject:
- Compliment:
- FCF:
- Gospel Answer:

CONVERSATION 18

BIBLICAL PREACHING

CHAPTERS 9-10

Reading Review and Discussion

Chapter 9

- What are the road signs in sermons? Is this an overestimation?
- What are the three characteristics of effective sermon style? Describe what the author means by each.
- What does the author mean when he says, "*For preachers, clarity is a moral matter.*" ?
- Why do *short and simple sentences* and phrases help clarity?
- How does using a *direct style* make a difference in preaching?
- What aspects make a *vivid style*?

Chapter 10

- What are the percentages of where communication comes from? Do you agree? Why or why not?
- What are the 4 characteristics of gestures?
- What are the 4 P's of vocal delivery? What does each of them achieve when used properly?

A Final Word

Did you read this section? (Yes or No)

Delivery in Preaching

Introduction

- Non-verbal communication is *as* important as verbal communication
- Gesture
- Posture
- Facial expression
- Eye contact
- Clothing and hairstyles
- Unconscious habits
- Non-verbal communication must match/correspond/be in sequence with verbal communication.
- Timing
- Mood
- Three factors that make all the difference in the world:
- *Pathos* (feelings, emotions) for the people and material.
- *Desire* to effectively communicate. Not settling with transferring information.
- *Digest* the content. Not just familiarity.
- “Hiding while leading” is the motto.

The First Movement

- Moving into the pulpit with confidence and purpose.
- White space (pause) for attention when appropriate.
 - Posture and eye contact before speaking.
- Begin before beginning for attention when appropriate.
 - Starting before or immediately upon arrival.
- 1. Making a personal connection with the people.
 - Greeting (about them, the leadership, the occasion). Beware of distracting from the Word. You must know the moment!
 - Non-verbal communication: facial expression, gesture, etc.

Posture

- Confidence but not arrogance.
- Relaxed but not lackadaisical.
- Personal but not in personal space.
- Unique but not for attention.

Head and Face

- Don't bury your face in your notes.
- Eye contact may be the single most important factor in the delivery of the sermon.
- Look at the entire audience but don't swivel your head.
- Three seconds (at most) at any one individual.
- Natural, animated facial gestures needed!

Gestures

- Content motivates/dictates movement.
 - When you NEED to move, move.
 - Don't waste a movement (Jesus hates pacing!). It's your secret weapon.
- 1. Reflect your audience's perspective.
 - They read from left to right so you should gesture from right to left.
- 2. Gestures
 - Explain and describe.
 - Emphasize importance.
 - Get and hold attention.
 - Puts you and people at ease.
 - Express and share emotions between speaker and listener.
- 3. Be spontaneous but purposeful.
- 4. Definite not halfhearted.

5. Make it visible and always above the waste (if not higher).
6. Vary gestures.
 - There are 700,000 different gestures we can make with out arms, wrists, hands and fingers.
 - Use big, medium and small gestures.
 - Left-handed and right-handed.
 - Smooth and choppy.
7. Only timed gestures are effective.
 - Preceding or accompanying what you say.

Voice

- Articulate
 - Be crisp without exaggeration.
- Pitch: movement of the voice up and down
 - Monotone: death.
 - Too much pitch makes you “flighty.”
- Volume
 - Example: “The Lord is my shepherd.” Five words, five different meanings when a different word is given a punch.
 - Never scream.
 - Beware of dropping off at the end of words.
- Rate
 - Changing the heart rate is the goal.

- Variety keeps people listening.
- Pause
 - “By your silence you shall speak.” Rudyard Kipling
 - How can pauses serve as punctuation marks?
 - Don’t be afraid of silence.
 - As with gestures, don’t overuse them because they are dramatic and can be misinterpreted.

Distracting Habits

- “Uh, er, so, just, ah, um, like...” are deadly.
- Pacing.
- Finger movements.
- Clearing the throat.
- Moving the neck.

CONVERSATIONS 19-22

LAB: SERMON OUTLINES

1. Choose a text to preach this semester.
2. Study the text using all the resources available to you.
3. Complete the *Appendix 2: Sermon Outline*.
4. On your assigned day, present your sermon outline to the class. Bring copies for each student or use the technology available to you.
5. Be prepared to answer questions posed to you by the class and instructor.

CONVERSATIONS 23-28

LAB: SERMONS

Sermon Requirements

- Time: 20-25 minutes
- Paper: A double-spaced, stapled in the upper left-hand corner, full manuscript must be turned in on the day of sermon delivery.
- Evaluations: Sermons delivered in class will be evaluated by each student using *Appendix 3: Sermon Evaluation*. These will be discussed in class.
- Each review will be turned in and reviewed by instructor.

APPENDIX 1

WRITING A CRITICAL BOOK REVIEW

- Bibliographic information on the author (if possible).
- Discuss the purpose of the book.
- Find statements in the book that could be the thesis.
- What are the presuppositions of the author concerning his/her subject and his/her readers?
- Discuss writing style (easy, hard, technical, etc.).
- Highlight the chapters:
- Describe the general flow of the book.
- Give highlights of the chapters.
- Summarize
- Facts
- Theology
- Use of Scripture
- Practicality of book
- Strengths and Weaknesses
- Conclude with the question concerning the accomplishment of author's purpose for book.

End on a positive note!

APPENDIX 2

SERMON OUTLINE

Text:

Exegetical Idea:

Subject:

Complement:

Big Idea/Homiletical Idea:

Subject/Question:

Complement/Answer:

Need/FCF:

Gospel Answer:

Sermon Outline:

- Include main points, secondary points, and sub-points beyond that if necessary. Use proper outlining form.
- Write the points out in complete sentences, just as you would say them in your sermon.
- Write out transitions in complete sentences, just as you would say them in your sermon.
- You do not have to write out illustrations you will use, simply show where they will be placed and provide a brief explanation.
- Show where your points are coming from in the text.
- Show how you will introduce and conclude your sermon, but you are not required to write them out for the outline.

APPENDIX 3
SERMON EVALUATION

Preacher:

Evaluator:

Evaluation Scale: 1-2 Poor 3-6 Average 7-8 Good 9-10 Excellent

ORGANIZATION

Evaluation for entire section:_____

1. Introduction

- Does it capture your attention?
- Does it directly or indirectly address a need? If so, what need?
- Does it orient you toward the subject/sermon? The text's idea?
- Is the purpose of the intro clear and the right length? Does it lead into the text?

2. Structure

- Do the main points and sub-points clearly relate to each other?
- Is the structure and development clear?
- Are the transitions clear and helpful?

3. Conclusion

- Does the sermon build to a compelling climax and end effectively?
- Did you leave with a clear answer to the need?

CONTENT

Evaluation for entire section:_____

1. Text

- Does the sermon originate and develop from the text?
- Is there an outline of the text? If so, what is it?

2. FCF, Gospel Statement, Proposition, B.I.

- Is there one? If so, state it.
- Does it come from the text?
- Is it significant and appropriate?

3. Gospel

- Does the sermon point to Christ? How?
- Does the sermon give a gospel answer to life? How?

4. Supporting Material

- Does the speaker effectively use illustrations, stories, quotes, etc?
- Does the supporting material clearly relate to the point?

STYLE

Evaluation for entire section:_____

1. Language

- Does the speaker use correct grammar and enunciate well?
- Does the speaker use vivid images? Give examples.

2. Style

- Does the speaker have a good grasp of his content?
- Does the speaker appear comfortable with his style?
- Is the speaker passionate/lively and does he believe what he is saying?

- Do you sense the speaker personally talking to you?

DELIVERY

Evaluation for entire section:_____

1. Oral Presentation

- Volume?
- Pitch?
- Pace/Rate?
- Pause?

2. Physical Presentation

- Posture?
- Facial Expression?
- Eye contact?
- Gestures?

OVERALL IMPACT

Evaluation for entire section:_____

1. Application

- Did the speaker help transform your thinking, feeling, and acting? How are you to respond?
- Did the sermon connect with you personally?

2. Purpose

- Did the speaker accomplish his purpose?
- Did you meet Christ?

APPENDIX 4

10 STAGES OF SERMON PREPARATION

Stage 1: Select the Text

- Discover and settle on text as literary unit.

Stage 2: Study the Text

- Text and Context: words, language, history, background, theology, etc.
- Author and Audience
- Questions you find that need answering/important points in the text that need emphasizing
- Notes: Outline text, diagram, paraphrase, read in multiple versions, memorize (if possible) and **pray** the text

Stage 3: Discover the Exegetical Idea (E.I.)

- Subject: What is the biblical author talking about? 5WHow Questions, in the form of a question.
- Complement: What is the biblical author saying about what he is talking about? In the form of an answer.

*Time bound statement.

- What is the need or Fallen Condition Focus (sin) the author is addressing?
- What is the sin/human concern/need/idol that is being addressed in the text or context? (Directly stated in text or strongly implied.) Don't stay at the surface level but go to the heart.
- Identify the grace from God that addresses this.

- How do we respond in obedience to this grace?
- Three Further Questions:
 1. What does this teach us about God and his work?
 2. What does this teach us about humanity and ourselves?
 3. What does this teach us about our world and culture?

Stage 4: Analyze the E.I.

- Three Development Questions of E.I.:

What does this mean?	Explanation	Ask of text: How is the author explaining the concept? Ask of Hearer: What does the audience need to know to be able to understand?
Is it true?	Proof	Same questions
What difference does it make?	Application	Same questions

Stage 5: Formulate the Big Idea/Homiletical Idea (B.I./H.I.)

- Create a statement from the E.I. that is fresh, contemporary, short, memorable, concrete, and in familiar terms.
- Focuses on response/action.
- Personal: directed toward people not about a topic.
- Question and Answer statement is suggested.

Stage 6: Determine the Sermon's Purpose

- Where does it come from? The text/context!
- Three-part Statement: “I want my audience to...”
 1. Mind/Intellect: Thinking
 2. Heart/Emotions/Attitudes: Feeling
 3. Will/Volition/Actions: Do
- See page 110 of *Biblical Preaching*.
- What are the measurable results from this statement?

Stage 7: Form of the Sermon

- Three Forms:

Deductive	An idea to be explained, a proposition to be proved, a principle to be applied
Inductive/Narrative	A story to be told
Semi-inductive	A subject to be completed

NOTE: Where the B.I. will be placed depends upon the sermon form.

Stage 8: Outline the Sermon

- May or may not be the outline of your text.
- Generally include: Introduction, Body, and Conclusion.
- Should be simple, written in complete sentences, including illustrations, transitions, and the B.I.

Stage 9: Filling in the Outline

- Material that explains, proves, applies, or amplifies the sermon points.

- Restatement, definitions, facts (i.e. statistics, examples, etc.), quotations, narration, direct address, and illustrations.
- See Figure 2, page 156 in *Biblical Preaching*.
- Remember the Golden Rule of Attention Spans: 7 minutes!

Stage 10: Prepare the Introduction and Conclusion

- Introduction: 90 seconds to get attention of listener!
 1. Gets attention.
 2. Uncovers need.
 3. Introduces the B.I. (in a deductive sermon)
 4. Connects to the body of the sermon.
- Conclusion
 1. Brings the sermon to a “burning focus.”
 2. Answers the B.I.
 3. Answers the “So what?” of your sermon.
 4. May be a summary, illustration, quotation, question, specific directions/application, or a prayer.

CHAPTER 5

OUTCOMES

Introduction

While pastoring in New Port Richey, Florida and enrolled in the Doctor of Ministry program at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, I was an adjunct professor at Trinity College of Florida from 2005-2011. During that time I taught the following biblical studies courses, *Pastoral Leadership*, *Introduction to Preaching* and *Advanced Preaching*. The goal of this project is to begin the process of adapting this course to the church-based ministry program at Grace Church, called Cultor House. This chapter will evaluate the results of two sets of evaluations. The first set of evaluations were received from Trinity College, using the IDEA results. The second set of evaluations were received from pastors, staff, and interns connected to Grace Church and Cultor House.

The Idea Evaluation Tool

In accordance with accreditation standards of The Association for Biblical Higher Education, I was evaluated by my students at the conclusion of each semester. The standard evaluation tool used was from an organization called IDEA. IDEA is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide assessment and feedback systems to improve learning in higher education. IDEA supports the evaluation and development of both programs and people in order to improve teaching, learning, and the higher education

process, while remaining true to our core values of integrity, quality, collaboration, service, and knowledge.

The evaluation tool used in my class was the IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction.¹ This system factors out extraneous circumstances, focuses on student learning of 12 specific objectives, and can be administered online or on paper. IDEA tailors each report to fit the instructor's selected learning objectives and offers recommendations for improvement based on a vast national database. In essence, IDEA builds in objectivity—while accommodating the creativity and artistry necessary to facilitate student learning. The Student Ratings of Instruction system solicits students' feedback on their own learning progress, effort, and motivation, as well as their perceptions of the instructor's use of 20 instructional strategies and teaching methods. In addition, the system surveys instructors regarding their overall goals and highlights them in the analysis and report.

The IDEA Student Ratings system looks at instruction in terms of its endgame. Rather than emphasizing teaching style or personality, the IDEA system focuses on student learning and the methods used to facilitate it. The Student Ratings of Instruction system draws upon IDEA's national database. This crucial comparative data provides a firm basis for identifying strengths and diagnosing areas in need of improvement, while

¹ See Appendix A, IDEA STUDENT RATINGS, for detailed survey results.

factoring out variables beyond the instructor's control, such as student work habits, student motivation, and class size.²

Discerning the Results of the IDEA Short Form Report³

Effective teaching is a complex art, and although student ratings cannot provide all of the information needed to evaluate and improve instruction. This guide will help you make better complete and accurate interpretations of results from the IDEA Short Form Report.

The Four Questions of the IDEA Short Form Report

Question 1: Overall, how effectively was this class taught?

(Refer to the tables and graph reported on Page 1 of the IDEA Short Form Report.)

One of the best ways to infer teaching effectiveness is to examine student ratings of progress on objectives chosen as *important* or *essential* by the instructor. The average of these rating provides a good indication of how successfully objectives were reached, especially if at least 10 students provided ratings and if at least 75 percent of enrollees responded. Progress ratings are on a 5-point scale: 1 = No apparent progress; 2 = Slight progress; 3 = Moderate progress; 4 = Substantial progress; and 5 = Exceptional progress.

² See www.ideaedu.org.

³ See www.theideacenter.org/shortguide.pdf.

In interpreting raw and adjusted averages, these terms can be substituted for the numeric figures; e.g., an average of 4.0 indicates that substantial progress is an appropriate term for summarizing student ratings. An overall index of teaching effectiveness (Progress on Relevant Objectives, or PRO) combines ratings of progress on the objectives identified by the instructor as *important* (weighted “1”) or *essential* (weighted “2”). The IDEA Center regards this as its single best estimate of teaching effectiveness. Raw and adjusted PRO scores are provided for converted averages as well as for those based on the 5-point rating scale. Converted averages are preferred when making comparisons among faculty members or classes because they take into account the fact that average progress ratings are much higher for some objectives than for others; that is, some objectives appear to be more easily achieved than others. Converted scores assure faculty members that they will not be penalized for selecting objectives that are especially difficult. Two additional overall measures of teaching effectiveness are shown on the report. These are the average ratings using a 5-point scale (1 = Definitely false; 5 = Definitely true).

Question 2: How do your ratings compare with those of other teachers?

(Refer to the comparisons shown on the right hand side of page 1 of the IDEA Short Form Report.)

Criterion-referenced standards avoid comparisons that can promote an unhealthy competitive atmosphere. Still, many institutions believe a norm-referenced (comparison-based) framework provides a better basis for making judgments about

teaching effectiveness. Your report compares your average ratings to results for three different groups of classes. The first comparison group is with all classes in the standard IDEA database, and is always reported. The other two are reported only if enough classes were available to provide a stable basis for comparison. These consist of (1) all classes in the *same discipline* as the class in question and (2) all classes *at your institution*. *Institutional* and *disciplinary* norms are updated annually and include the most recent five years of data. The IDEA database is updated on a periodical basis.

Question 3. Were you more successful in facilitating progress on some class objectives than on others?

(Refer to the upper portion of page 2 of the IDEA Short Form Report.)

The first portion of page 2 lists the 12 objectives included on the IDEA form and summarizes student ratings on those selected as either *important* or *essential*. A review of the specific objectives can help you determine where you might focus improvement efforts. The reporting format is similar to that used on page 1. In addition to raw and adjusted scores, the report shows the percent of students making ratings in the two lowest categories (no apparent progress or slight progress) and in the two highest categories (substantial progress and exceptional progress). Converted scores are shown in the right-hand section and compared with the three norm groups previously described (IDEA Database and, if available, Discipline and Institution). In addition to the actual converted average, the report describes the status of each relative to other classes in the comparison group: **Much higher** (highest 10 percent); **Higher** (next 20

percent); **Similar** (middle 40 percent); **Lower** (next 20 percent); or **Much Lower** (lowest 10 percent). Using broad categories like these, rather than precise numbers, is a reminder that ratings are neither perfectly reliable nor perfectly valid.

Question 4: Do some salient characteristics of this class and its students have implications for instruction?

(Refer to the bottom portion of page 2 of the IDEA Short Form Report.)

Student Characteristics: Students described their motivation by making self-ratings on the two items listed at the bottom of page 2. These characteristics have been found to impact student ratings of progress.

Cultor House Survey

The following analysis is based upon the results compiled from a survey conducted at Grace Church and Cultor House.⁴ Twenty-one useful completed surveys were received. Six surveys were completed by senior pastoral staff, six surveys were completed by additional ministry staff, and nine surveys were completed by ministry interns.

The first section of the survey included 18 questions that address the clarity, reasonableness, and modification needs of the syllabus and course materials used at Trinity in order to apply it to the Cultor House context. The second section included six

⁴ See Appendix C, Cultor House Surveys, for a copy of the completed surveys.

open-ended questions designed to receive specific feedback. A final question asked about the area of ministry in which the respondent was involved.

Senior Pastoral Staff

The feedback from this first group was overwhelmingly favorable. That being said, questions 3, 7, and 18 received a response of 2 from 1 respondent, 2 respondents, and 1 respondent, respectively.

Question 3 stated that the course objectives in the syllabus did not need to be modified. One respondent provided specific that the objective related to students learning how to evaluate sermons was unnecessary. On the other, another respondent commented that this was one of the strengths of the materials.

The overall feedback from this group was quite supportive. Most of the feedback revolved around terminology, theology, and opportunities for student application. An excellent point was made that if this a part of a 2-course block of instruction, much of the material could stay as is. On the other hand, if it is to be a stand-alone course, then reducing some of the theory, and increasing student opportunities to preach may benefit the students more.

Ministry Staff

Like the feedback received from the senior pastoral staff, the feedback from this group was overwhelmingly favorable. That being said, questions 8 and 9 received a

response of 2 from 1 respondent. These two questions are directly connected in that question 8 discussed the reasonableness of the course requirements, and chapter 9 asked if the course requirements needed to be change. Given that the respondent scored question 8 low, in made sense that question 9 would also score low.

The respondent who scored questions 8 and 9 with a 2 explained that requiring the use of sermon manuscript may not beneficial for all. He further add that it could negatively impact the delivery style of some preachers.

Most of the open-ended feedback revolved around the course materials and opportunities for student application. Most indicated that the materials and syllabus were quite clear, stating that students would certainly know what was expected of them. Like the senior pastoral staff, many indicated that more opportunities for students to practice the principles of sermon preparation and delivery would strengthen the course.

Interns

Not surprisingly, some of the lower feedback came from this groups. One respondent indicated that the course procedures were unreasonable and needed to be modified. Another respondent indicated that the course conversations needed to modified. Three respondents, including these first two, indicated that the class schedule needed to be modified.

Primarily, the explanations for these low scores centered on the need to reduce the length of the course and the depth of some of the conversations. The common

reason was tied to the idea that not all of those participating would be considering seminary or preaching. This feedback was actually fell in line with what the author expected to receive. However, it was surprising that this was not much of a focus for the senior pastoral staff and the ministry staff. On a side note, it was interesting to note that two intern respondent indicated that the number of allowed absence should be reduced.

Again, like the prior two groups, much of the feedback indicated that the syllabus and materials were clear. Echoing the pastors and staff, the interns also believed the course would be more beneficial if the theory components were reduced and the opportunities for student practice were increased.

Evaluation and Need of Course Improvement

1. Expand scope of the course to those who may never preach but will likely teach.

Entering the profession of preaching is a limited field. Who can tell those who may have an opportunity to serve in this way? Add to this the fact that some may enter the pastorate but not be one who preaches or fill the pulpit. But most if not all of those who would take this course will have the opportunity to teach, from children to adults. To focus on a form of communication that is primarily a monologue is to largely exclude many of the class members. Though many of the principles that guide preaching translate to teaching, it forces the student to not only learn the content but to apply it to teaching in particular. I would include the following sections:

- Basic differences and commonalities between preaching and teaching.
- How to lead class discussions.
- The art of asking good questions.
- Age appropriate communication.
- Sermon preparation vs. teaching preparation.

2. Employ small group learning inside and outside of the classroom.

Many people learn through group discussion better than through a single person presenting. I would take some of the principles of the exercises and instead of explaining what you *could* do I'd actually *do* them. Some examples would be:

- Divide into groups and have students create an illustration on a topic of my choice. Then have one of the group members present it while the rest of the class evaluates.
- Divide them into groups outside of class to answer the questions from the reading and have one of the group members present their answers in class.
- Open the class with a discussion question. Have them gather in groups to answer the question and give reasoning for their answers.

3. Employ more large group learning activities in class.

Rather than lecture formats, I would have each of them present exercises done inside the classroom. Examples of this technique would be:

- Have them do mini-sermons as a way of discovering their default patterns of thinking when approaching a text. Then compare and contrast the different presentations in the class.

4. Have students make presentations and lead classroom learning exercises.

Those who learn often do so best when they are teaching. Engaging the student with classroom responsibility will encourage preparation and participation. Some ways to employ this are:

- Study a text they will be preaching outside of class and present to the class the Big Idea, some basic exegesis, and illustrative themes. Then have the class give critiques and ideas of how to improve their content.
- Give students teaching material, have them prepare outside of class to teach, and then have them teach that material to the class. This is done to engage them in the topic, help them learn the content, and give them reps on teaching a class.

5. Practice introductions, writing illustrations, and applications in class.

When the material covering these is presented, give them opportunities in class to write, create, and present an illustration. The class and the instructor will then evaluate their content and give critical suggestions. This will provide the instructor an opportunity to teach content inductively and experientially.

6. Bring and present examples to class of current events for illustrations.

Have the students find newspaper articles, magazines articles, movies, TV shows, pictures, videos, advertisement, etc., that illustrate a portion of the sermon we are creating in class, or ones they will be preaching during the semester. They must also present them. The students will then have an opportunity to evaluate and provide ideas for future use.

7. Use more preaching audio and video clips.

These should be used almost on a daily basis in class. Good and negative examples encourage a higher level of learning. Some ways of incorporating clips would be:

- Positive and negative examples of introductions.
- Positive and negative examples of how to handle the text.
- Positive and negative examples of illustrations.
- Positive and negative examples of the use of the body. The use of video is a key learning tool because a teacher can show portions of sermons on mute and ask students what they think the speaker is communicating. Then watch the clip again with the volume up and see if they are in agreement.
- Compare and contrast different preachers speaking on the same text.

8. Introduce idea mapping as a way of sermon preparation.

Idea mapping is a whole-brained visual thinking tool that enhances thought organization, planning, creativity, communication, and memory. It uses color,

keywords, lines and images to connect thoughts associatively. Many, especially the younger generations, naturally process this way and this tool can be a very helpful way of processing. This is a great group exercise in class as well a tool to be used individually outside of class.

APPENDIX A

IDEA STUDENT RATINGS

CURTIS, C

Trinity College of Florida

Communications 003301

TU 02:25

Fall 2011



IDEA Short Form Report

To learn more, see the Interpretive Guide: www.theideacenter.org/shortguide.pdf

Of the 10 students enrolled, 10 responded (100%). Feedback from individual classes is always useful to guide improvement efforts. Typically, multiple classes should be used for evaluation, using more classes when they are small (fewer than 10) or when they have low response rates (less than 60%) (see www.theideacenter.org/AdminDecisions).

Summary Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness

Teaching effectiveness is assessed in two ways: **A. Progress on Relevant Objectives**, a weighted average of student ratings of the progress they reported on objectives selected as "Important" or "Essential" (double weighted) and **B. Overall Ratings**, the average student agreement with statements that the teacher and the course were excellent. The **SUMMARY EVALUATION** is the average of these two measures. Individual institutions may prefer to combine these measures in some other manner to arrive at a summary judgment.

Converted Averages are standardized scores that take into account the fact that the average ratings for items on the IDEA form are not equal; students report more progress on some objectives than on others. Converted scores all have the same average (50) and the same variability (a standard deviation of 10); about 40% of them will be between 45 and 55. Because measures are not perfectly reliable, it is best to regard the "true score" as lying within plus or minus 3 of the reported score.

For comparative purposes, use converted averages. Your converted averages are compared with those from all classes in the IDEA database. If enough classes are available, comparisons are also made with classes in the same broad discipline as this class and/or with all classes that used IDEA at your institution. The Interpretive Guide offers some suggestions for using comparative results; some institutions may prefer to establish their own "standards" based on raw or adjusted scores rather than on comparative standing.

Both **unadjusted** (raw) and **adjusted** averages are reported. The latter makes classes more comparable by considering factors that influence student ratings, yet are beyond the instructor's control. Scores are adjusted to take into account student work habits (item 13), student desire to take the course regardless of who taught it (item 15), and instructor reported class size.

Your Average Scores

	Your Average (5-point scale)	
	Raw	Adj.
A. Progress on Relevant Objectives ¹ Two objectives were selected as relevant (Important or Essential –see page 2)	5.0	4.6
Overall Ratings		
B. Excellent Teacher	5.0	4.7
C. Excellent Course	5.0	4.5
D. Average of B & C	5.0	4.6
Summary Evaluation (Average of A & D) ¹	5.0	4.6

¹ If you are comparing Progress on Relevant Objectives from one instructor to another, use the converted average.

² The process for computing Progress on Relevant Objectives for the Discipline and Institution was modified on May 1, 2006. Do not compare these results with reports generated prior to this date.

Your Converted Average When Compared to All Classes in the IDEA Database

Comparison Category	A. Progress on Relevant Objectives		Overall Ratings						Summary Evaluation (Average of A & D)	
	B. Excellent Teacher		C. Excellent Course		D. Average of B & C					
	Raw	Adj.	Raw	Adj.	Raw	Adj.	Raw	Adj.	Raw	Adj.
Much Higher Highest 10% (63 or higher)	68		63		68		66		67	
Higher Next 20% (56–62)		61		58		59		59		60
Similar Middle 40% (45–55)										
Lower Next 20% (38–44)										
Much Lower Lowest 10% (37 or lower)										

Your Converted Average When Compared to Your:²

Discipline (IDEA Data)	66	60	62	58	67	58	65	58	66	59
Institution	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

IDEA Discipline used for comparison:
Communications

Student Ratings of Learning on Relevant (Important and Essential) Objectives

Average unadjusted (raw) and adjusted progress ratings are shown below for those objectives you identified as "Important" or "Essential." **Progress on Relevant Objectives** (also shown on page 1) is a weighted average of student ratings of the progress they reported on objectives selected as "Important" or "Essential" (double weighted). The percent of students rating each as "1" or "2" (either "no" or "slight" progress) and as "4" or "5" ("substantial" or "exceptional" progress) is also reported. These results should help you identify objectives where improvement efforts might best be focused. For resources on improving learning and teaching, please refer to the POD-IDEA Center Notes (www.theideacenter.org/podidea), and POD-IDEA Center Learning Notes (www.theideacenter.org/podidea/PODNotesLearning.html).

	Importance Rating	Your Average (5-point scale)		Percent of Students Rating	
		Raw	Adj.	1 or 2	4 or 5
1. Gaining factual knowledge (terminology, classifications, methods, trends)	Minor/None				
2. Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories	Minor/None				
3. Learning to apply/course material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions)	Essential	4.9	4.5	0%	100%
4. Developing specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in the field most closely related to this course	Minor/None				
5. Acquiring skills in working with others as a member of a team	Minor/None				
6. Developing creative capacities (writing, inventing, designing, performing in art, music, drama, etc.)	Minor/None				
7. Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity (music, science, literature, etc.)	Minor/None				
8. Developing skill in expressing myself orally or in writing	Essential	5.0	4.7	0%	100%
9. Learning how to find and use resources for answering questions or solving problems	Minor/None				
10. Developing a clearer understanding of, and commitment to, personal values	Minor/None				
11. Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view	Minor/None				
12. Acquiring an interest in learning more by asking my own questions and seeking answers	Minor/None				
Progress on Relevant Objectives		5.0	4.6		

¹ The process for computing Progress on Relevant Objectives for the Discipline and Institution was modified on May 1, 2006. Do not compare these results with reports generated prior to this date.

Your Converted Average When Compared to Group Averages					
IDEA Database		IDEA Discipline		Your Institution ¹	
Raw	Adj.	Raw	Adj.	Raw	Adj.
68	59	65	57	NA	NA
Much Higher	Higher	Much Higher	Higher		
68	63	67	62	NA	NA
Much Higher	Higher	Much Higher	Higher		
68	61	66	60	NA	NA

Much Higher = Highest 10% of classes (63 or higher)
 Higher = Next 20% (56-62)
 Similar = Middle 40% (45-55)
 Lower = Next 20% (38-44)
 Much Lower = Lowest 10% (37 or lower)

Description of Students

The two items describing your students relate to their academic motivation and work habits and are key factors in developing adjusted ratings.

Student Description	Your Average (5-point scale)
13. As a rule, I put forth more effort than other students on academic work.	4.2
15. I really wanted to take this course regardless of who taught it.	4.2

Your Converted Average When Compared to Group Averages			
IDEA Database		IDEA Discipline	
Raw	Adj.	Raw	Adj.
68	61	61	59
Much Higher	Higher	Higher	Higher
66	67	67	65
Much Higher	Much Higher	Much Higher	Much Higher

Much Higher = Highest 10% of classes (63 or higher)
 Higher = Next 20% (56-62)
 Similar = Middle 40% (45-55)
 Lower = Next 20% (38-44)
 Much Lower = Lowest 10% (37 or lower)

Statistical Detail

The details on this page are of interest primarily to those who want to confirm scores reported on pages 1 and 2 or who want to determine if responses to some items were distributed in an unusual manner.

Converted Averages are reported only for relevant learning objectives (Important or Essential –see page 2) and other items for which comparisons were provided.

	Number Responding							Converted Avg.		Comparison Group Average			
	1	2	3	4	5	Omit	Avg.	s.d.	Raw	Adj.	IDEA	Discipline	Institution
1. Gaining factual knowledge (terminology, classifications....	0	0	0	1	9	0	4.9	0.3	NA	NA	4.0	4.2	NA
2. Learning fundamental principles, generalizations, or theories	0	0	0	0	10	0	5.0	0.0	NA	NA	3.9	4.1	NA
3. Learning to apply course material (to improve thinking....	0	0	0	1	9	0	4.9	0.3	68	59	4.0	4.2	NA
4. Developing specific skills, competencies, and points of view....	0	0	0	0	10	0	5.0	0.0	NA	NA	4.0	4.2	NA
5. Acquiring skills in working with others as a member of a team	0	0	0	2	8	0	4.8	0.4	NA	NA	3.9	4.1	NA
6. Developing creative capacities (writing, inventing, designing....	0	0	0	1	9	0	4.9	0.3	NA	NA	3.9	4.2	NA
7. Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of....	0	0	0	0	10	0	5.0	0.0	NA	NA	3.7	4.0	NA
8. Developing skill in expressing myself orally or in writing	0	0	0	0	10	0	5.0	0.0	68	63	3.8	4.2	NA
9. Learning how to find and use resources for answering....	0	0	0	1	9	0	4.9	0.3	NA	NA	3.7	4.0	NA
10. Developing a clearer understanding of, and commitment to....	0	0	0	0	10	0	5.0	0.0	NA	NA	3.8	4.0	NA
11. Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments....	0	0	0	0	10	0	5.0	0.0	NA	NA	3.8	4.0	NA
12. Acquiring an interest in learning more by asking my own....	0	0	0	0	10	0	5.0	0.0	NA	NA	3.8	4.0	NA
Key: 1=No apparent progress 2=Slight progress 3=Moderate progress 4=Substantial progress 5=Exceptional progress Bold=Selected as Important or Essential													
13. As a rule, I put forth more effort than other students on....	0	1	0	5	4	0	4.2	0.9	68	NA	3.6	3.9	NA
14. My background prepared me well for this course's requirements.	0	1	0	6	5	0	4.5	1.1	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
15. I really wanted to take this course regardless of who taught it.	1	0	1	2	6	0	4.2	1.3	66	NA	3.3	3.3	NA
16. As a result of taking this course, I have more positive feelings....	0	0	0	2	8	0	4.8	0.4	66	55	3.9	4.0	NA
17. Overall, I rate this instructor an excellent teacher.	0	0	0	0	10	0	5.0	0.0	63	56	4.2	4.3	NA
18. Overall, I rate this course as excellent.	0	0	0	0	10	0	5.0	0.0	68	58	3.9	4.1	NA
Key: 1 = Definitely False 2 = More False than True 3 = In Between 4 = More True than False 5 = Definitely True Item 14 is an experimental item. Therefore, no comparative information is available.													

Additional Questions:

	1	2	3	4	5	Omit	Avg.	s.d.
19.	0	0	0	0	10	0	5.0	0.0
20.	0	0	0	0	10	0	5.0	0.0
21.	0	0	0	0	10	0	5.0	0.0
22.	0	0	0	0	10	0	5.0	0.0
23.	0	0	0	0	10	0	5.0	0.0
24.	0	0	0	0	10	0	5.0	0.0
25.	0	0	0	0	10	0	5.0	0.0
26.	6	0	0	0	4	0	2.6	2.1
27.	0	0	0	0	10	0	5.0	0.0
28.	0	0	0	0	10	0	5.0	0.0
29.	0	0	0	0	10	0	5.0	0.0
30.	0	0	0	0	10	0	5.0	0.0
31.	0	0	0	0	10	0	5.0	0.0
32.	0	0	0	2	8	0	4.8	0.4
33.	0	0	0	0	10	0	5.0	0.0
34.	0	0	0	0	10	0	5.0	0.0
35.	0	0	0	0	10	0	5.0	0.0
36.	0	0	0	0	10	0	5.0	0.0
37.	0	0	0	0	10	0	5.0	0.0
38.	0	0	0	0	10	0	5.0	0.0

Notes

Discipline code selected on FIF: 0900
Discipline code used for comparison: 0900

APPENDIX B

CULTOR HOUSE PREACHING COURSE SURVEY

This survey is designed to gain your feedback as it relates to the future preaching course to be designed for those participating in Cultor House. Your feedback is important because it will help to shape the design and implementation of the course. The accompany document includes a syllabus and instructional materials used for a course taught at Trinity College of Florida. After reviewing the syllabus and materials, please answer the following the following question designed to discover how the course may be adapted to fit the needs of Cultor House participants. Thank you for time and contribution to this important work.

Using the scale below, please select the appropriate number for each statement by placing an 'x' in the corresponding box.

Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

In the syllabus, for a Cultor House participant...		1	2	3	4	5
1.	The course objectives are clear.					
2.	The course objectives are reasonable.					
3.	The course objectives do not need to be modified.					
4.	The course procedures are clear.					
5.	The course procedures are reasonable.					
6.	The course procedures do not need to be modified.					
7.	The course requirements are clear.					
8.	The course requirements are reasonable.					
9.	The course requirements do not need to be modified.					
10.	The course textbooks are clear.					
11.	The course textbooks are reasonable.					
12.	The course textbooks do not need to be modified.					
13.	The class schedule is clear.					
14.	The class schedule is reasonable.					
15.	The class schedule does not need to be modified.					
16.	The course conversations are clear.					
17.	The course conversations are reasonable.					
18.	The course conversations do not need to be modified.					

Please type your responses for the questions below.

1. For the items listed above, please provide brief explanations for each statement rated with a 1 or 2, identifying the number of the statement followed by the comments.
2. Please identify 3 strengths of the materials provided.
3. Please identify 3 weaknesses of the materials provided.
4. What changes would you make to the syllabus?
5. What changes would you make to the course conversations?
6. Please include any additional comments you may like to include.
7. Please identify your general role at Grace Church:

Senior Pastoral Staff ___ Pastoral Staff ___ Intern ___

APPENDIX C

CULTOR HOUSE SURVEYS

Cultor House Preaching Course Survey

This survey is designed to gain your feedback as it relates to the future preaching course to be designed for those participating in Cultor House. Your feedback is important because it will help to shape the design and implementation of the course. The accompany document includes a syllabus and instructional materials used for a course taught at Trinity College of Florida. After reviewing the syllabus and materials, please answer the following the following question designed to discover how the course may be adapted to fit the needs of Cultor House participants. Thank you for time and contribution to this important work.

Using the scale below, please select the appropriate number for each statement by placing an 'x' in the corresponding box.

Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

In the syllabus, for a Cultor House participant...		1	2	3	4	5
1.	The course objectives are clear.					X
2.	The course objectives are reasonable.					X
3.	The course objectives do not need to be modified.					X
4.	The course procedures are clear.					X
5.	The course procedures are reasonable.					X
6.	The course procedures do not need to be modified.					X
7.	The course requirements are clear.					X
8.	The course requirements are reasonable.					X
9.	The course requirements do not need to be modified.					X
10.	The course textbooks are clear.					X
11.	The course textbooks are reasonable.					X
12.	The course textbooks do not need to be modified.					x
13.	The class schedule is clear.				X	
14.	The class schedule is reasonable.					X
15.	The class schedule does not need to be modified.				x	
16.	The course conversations are clear.					X
17.	The course conversations are reasonable.					X
18.	The course conversations do not need to be modified.					x

Please type your responses for the questions below.

1. For the items listed above, please provide brief explanations for each statement rated with a 1 or 2, identifying the number of the statement followed by the comments.
 - a. None
2. Please identify 3 strengths of the materials provided.
 - a. Very helpful tools throughout: i.e. "10 stages of sermon preparation" and other appendixes
 - b. Clear direction and preparation
 - c. Surprise assignment and the clarity on how to use it to learn where your students are.
3. Please identify 3 weaknesses of the materials provided.
 - a. Frequency of opportunity to teach and be critiqued throughout the course
 - b. Since a large aspect of preaching is the "communication" piece, I would have expected to see more outside resources and hear from more voices both Christian and "non"Christian in nature about communicating
 - c. Lack of historical discussion on preaching
4. What changes would you make to the syllabus?
 - a. I could be missing something but it appears the students get one attempt at preaching at the beginning of the course. The next time they get to preach is at the end of the course. I would think incorporating more opportunities/exercises at preaching in class to be critiqued/reviewed would be most beneficial. Incorporating practice and learning could be helpful
5. What changes would you make to the course conversations?
 - a. Could use a slight addition of the history of preaching/preachers somewhere early on in the conversation... Possibly, some time spent on how preaching has changed over time, etc...
 - b. I would encourage some conversation to be spent on the art of communicating, incorporating materials and thought outside the Christian sphere if helpful
6. Please include any additional comments you may like to include.
 - a. The syllabus and course materials are a well-contrived document that properly guides the student to a thorough understanding of preaching in its essence. I would expect the student to come away with all of the

course objectives, due to the thorough, well-designed nature of the syllabus and class.

- b. The Gospel-centric focus is obviously a high priority to the instructor and I believe this is handled with proper fervor and attention.

7. Please identify your general role at Grace Church:

Pastoral Staff ☐ Ministry Staff ☒ Intern ☐

Cultor House Preaching Course Survey

This survey is designed to gain your feedback as it relates to the future preaching course to be designed for those participating in Cultor House. Your feedback is important because it will help to shape the design and implementation of the course. The accompany document includes a syllabus and instructional materials used for a course taught at Trinity College of Florida. After reviewing the syllabus and materials, please answer the following the following question designed to discover how the course may be adapted to fit the needs of Cultor House participants. Thank you for time and contribution to this important work.

Using the scale below, please select the appropriate number for each statement by placing an 'x' in the corresponding box.

Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

In the syllabus, for a Cultor House participant...		1	2	3	4	5
1.	The course objectives are clear.					X
2.	The course objectives are reasonable.					X
3.	The course objectives do not need to be modified.				X	
4.	The course procedures are clear.					X
5.	The course procedures are reasonable.					X
6.	The course procedures do not need to be modified.				X	
7.	The course requirements are clear.					X
8.	The course requirements are reasonable.					X
9.	The course requirements do not need to be modified.				X	
10.	The course textbooks are clear.					X
11.	The course textbooks are reasonable.					X
12.	The course textbooks do not need to be modified.				X	
13.	The class schedule is clear.					X
14.	The class schedule is reasonable.					X
15.	The class schedule does not need to be modified.				X	
16.	The course conversations are clear.					X
17.	The course conversations are reasonable.					X
18.	The course conversations do not need to be modified.				x	

Please type your responses for the questions below.

1. For the items listed above, please provide brief explanations for each statement rated with a 1 or 2, identifying the number of the statement followed by the comments.
2. Please identify 3 strengths of the materials provided.
 1. Extremely clear and thorough in its lay out and conceptual development
 2. Multiple opportunities for practical application as well as real-time feedback
 3. Multiple interactive opportunities for students to engage an idea in discussion as opposed to heavily lecture oriented
3. Please identify 3 weaknesses of the materials provided.
 1. Pre-supposes venue of delivery being the same, might want to create opportunities where methodology determined by audience/venue
 2. Multi-cultural applications maybe hard to extrapolate
 3. Lack of discipleship applications/tie-ins.
4. What changes would you make to the syllabus?
 1. Lab/examples mostly scheduled on back side of course, would be good to be interspersed between sections, i.e. Two weeks of Supremacy of God in Preaching, example, 2 weeks of Gospel in Preaching, example, etc.
5. What changes would you make to the course conversations?
 1. For Cultor House, the applications and methodology may need to be unpacked further in the conversations. Some student ministry, small group settings, etc. Can the spirit of preaching be applied to discipleship outside of a corporate worship service experience. What are the mentorship/discipleship applications
 2. What do we do with preaching, how to respond and act. I think this would impact how the teacher communicates and teaches.
6. Please include any additional comments you may like to include.
7. Please identify your general role at Grace Church:

Senior Pastoral Staff ☐ Pastoral Staff ☒ Intern ☐

Cultor House Preaching Course Survey

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Using the scale below, please select the appropriate number for each statement by placing an 'x' in the corresponding box.

Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

In the syllabus, for a Cultor House participant...		1	2	3	4	5
1.	The course objectives are clear.					x
2.	The course objectives are reasonable.			x		
3.	The course objectives do not need to be modified.		x			
4.	The course procedures are clear.			x		
5.	The course procedures are reasonable.				x	
6.	The course procedures do not need to be modified.		x			
7.	The course requirements are clear.					x
8.	The course requirements are reasonable.			x		
9.	The course requirements do not need to be modified.			x		
10.	The course textbooks are clear.					x
11.	The course textbooks are reasonable.			x		
12.	The course textbooks do not need to be modified.				x	
13.	The class schedule is clear.					x
14.	The class schedule is reasonable.				x	
15.	The class schedule does not need to be modified.				x	
16.	The course conversations are clear.				x	
17.	The course conversations are reasonable.			x		
18.	The course conversations do not need to be modified.		x			

Please type your responses for the questions below.

1. For the items listed above, please provide brief explanations for each statement rated with a 1 or 2, identifying the number of the statement followed by the comments.

Re: No. 2 -- Number 2 of your objectives emphasizes "biblically based", "gospel oriented" and "Christ-centered". I think it lacks a proper emphasis on "expositional". I also believe the idea of "Christ-centered" needs to be handled very carefully because I've seen it lead easily toward a dismal of authorial intent for a given passage.

Re: No. 6 – I believe your statement on plagiarism is fuzzy... needs a couple more sentences to clarify just what constitutes plagiarism and how it differs from legitimate usage of materials gained from outside sources.

2. Please identify 3 strengths of the materials provided.
 - a. The thorough delineation of the course lectures and assignments.
 - b. The emphasis on the theocentric nature of the Scriptures and the gospel-centric nature of the Scriptures
 - c. The focus on determining a Big Idea
3. Please identify 3 weaknesses of the materials provided.
 - a. Not given an idea of how much time will be allotted for the course for the Cultor House interns... will it be 3 hours a week for 15 weeks, plus at least a comparable amount of out of class work expected as well. Not knowing this made it hard to answer the questions of whether the course objectives and requirements are reasonable.
 - b. Re: the page covering "Preaching is primary" under Core Convictions About Preaching". I think we need to be careful of word definitions, namely, about the definition of "preaching". The modern definition of preaching (that is, how it is commonly understood) is not what some of your passages are referring to.
 - c. I think the course material emphasizes theory of appropriate preaching at the expense of praxis of preaching. That's fine, if you have the privilege of 2 semesters of training, but not if you only have one semester.

4. What changes would you make to the syllabus?

I would be very careful about your emphasis of Christ-Centered Preaching. I realize that it's very popular now (especially since Chappell's book) but, unless it is handled very carefully, it leads toward a dismissal of authorial intent. When that happens, preachers honor Christ but don't honor the Holy Spirit who led writers to write what they wrote and **why** they wrote what they wrote. That confusion led to Chappell's substantially revised second edition of *Christ-Centered Preaching*.

I would also add some demonstrations of how to go about transitioning from **analysis** of a given passage to an appropriate **synthesis** of the passage, so that the end result is truly expository.

5. What changes would you make to the course conversations?

Less focus on the theory of appropriate content of the sermon, and more focus on the processes of communication... **unless**... you'll have an opportunity for a second course.

I especially would encourage some careful focus on the need for good transitions and the nature of a good transition.

6. Please include any additional comments you may like to include.

As you discuss the distinction between deductive and inductive sermons, please admit that while inductive sermons seem to be more appropriate, they are also harder to preach... the progress of inductive sermons seem deceptively easy to follow to the preacher but, often, are not easy to follow for the hearers.

7. Please identify your general role at Grace Church:

Pastoral Staff X Ministry Staff Intern

Cultor House Preaching Course Survey

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Using the scale below, please select the appropriate number for each statement by placing an 'x' in the corresponding box.

Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree
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In the syllabus, for a Cultor House participant...		1	2	3	4	5
1.	The course objectives are clear.				X	
2.	The course objectives are reasonable.				X	
3.	The course objectives do not need to be modified.				X	
4.	The course procedures are clear.					X
5.	The course procedures are reasonable.					X
6.	The course procedures do not need to be modified.				X	
7.	The course requirements are clear.					X
8.	The course requirements are reasonable.					X
9.	The course requirements do not need to be modified.				X	
10.	The course textbooks are clear.					X
11.	The course textbooks are reasonable.					X
12.	The course textbooks do not need to be modified.					X
13.	The class schedule is clear.					X
14.	The class schedule is reasonable.					X
15.	The class schedule does not need to be modified.					X
16.	The course conversations are clear.				X	
17.	The course conversations are reasonable.				X	
18.	The course conversations do not need to be modified.				X	

Please type your responses for the questions below.

1. For the items listed above, please provide brief explanations for each statement rated with a 1 or 2, identifying the number of the statement followed by the comments
2. Please identify 3 strengths of the materials provided.
 - The materials provided give a clear depiction of what the course will entail
 - The materials provided put an emphasis on the scripture and how that should sculpt biblical preaching.
 - Discussion questions provide for a challenge for the students to have to evaluate and articulate what they are learning and how to put that into action.
3. Please identify 3 weaknesses of the materials provided.
 - Some of the course materials are more exhaustive than others, more clarity in certain areas could be helpful
 - In some areas, expounding upon the text to further explain its relevance to the teaching material could bring more power to the point.
 - Having students preaching more during the class to be evaluated and critiqued by the instructor and the class would create more hands on experience. While discussion questions are strong, gaining some extra experience in class setting would be beneficial.
4. What changes would you make to the syllabus?
 - While I think the way that the material is laid out well, I think being able to provide clarity on theoretical side and practical side and how they work together could bring forth more clarity for students as they learn the material. Making sure that the theoretical and practical work hand in hand will help the material sink in and provide for practically post education.
5. What changes would you make to the course conversations?
 - Adding more conversation around the practicality of preaching and how to become a better communicator would be helpful. The conversations create a great foundation for students to build on however covering the practicality of communicating out of authenticity and clarity around how to communicate the point you are trying to make would be extremely helpful.
6. Please include any additional comments you may like to include.
 - Overall I think that the material's provided are very helpful and practical. Students should not have any questions about what is expected/required of them and given that they do the work required, they will leave the class with a higher understanding of Biblical Preaching

7. Please identify your general role at Grace Church:

Pastoral Staff ☐ Ministry Staff ☒ Intern ☐

Cultor House Preaching Course Survey

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Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

In the syllabus, for a Cultor House participant...		1	2	3	4	5
1.	The course objectives are clear.				X	
2.	The course objectives are reasonable.				X	
3.	The course objectives do not need to be modified.				X	
4.	The course procedures are clear.				X	
5.	The course procedures are reasonable.		X			
6.	The course procedures do not need to be modified.		X			
7.	The course requirements are clear.				X	
8.	The course requirements are reasonable.			X		
9.	The course requirements do not need to be modified.			X		
10.	The course textbooks are clear.				X	
11.	The course textbooks are reasonable.				X	
12.	The course textbooks do not need to be modified.				X	
13.	The class schedule is clear.					X
14.	The class schedule is reasonable.				X	
15.	The class schedule does not need to be modified.		X			
16.	The course conversations are clear.					X
17.	The course conversations are reasonable.				X	
18.	The course conversations do not need to be modified.				X	

Please type your responses for the questions below.

1. For the items listed above, please provide brief explanations for each statement rated with a 1 or 2, identifying the number of the statement followed by the comments.
 - **Course procedures are reasonable/ Course procedures need to be modified:** I think allowing students to miss five classes is too many. There are only 18 true class periods (not including labs and presentations). This would allow a student to miss nearly a third of the class without penalty. I think they should be able to only miss three classes to ensure they receive the proper amount of the course teachings.
 - **Class schedule needs to be modified:** While I think the final project of delivering a short sermon is adequate, I think there should be another opportunity for students to deliver another sermon earlier in the class. This would give the instructor an opportunity to give more feedback to the student and for the student to see growth in their ability to preach in the semester.
2. Please identify 3 strengths of the materials provided.
 - The requirements and expectations of the class are clearly defined. As a student, they would know exactly what was expected of them in each class session and for the semester as a whole.
 - The conversational nature of the course is a huge strength. Each student will have their personal strategies and strengths when they teach. Being in dialog with the professor about such things will pay dividends to them in the long run. And the professor will be able to give valuable feedback to the students.
 - The *Critical Book Review* aspect is another valuable component of the course. It will cause the student to be fully engaged with the texts and to digest the material in a way that will cause them to personally apply the material on a consistent basis.
3. Please identify 3 weaknesses of the materials provided.
 - The course does not specifically have any content about choosing specific topics/ series to teach through. I think it would be helpful to teach on how to prepare a multiple-week message series along with the details of what it takes to prepare an individual sermon.

- Some material is repetitive. For example, conversation four under “Christ-Centered, Gospel-Transformational Preaching” is very similar to conversation two under “What is the Gospel?”
4. What changes would you make to the syllabus?
- I know there is not a calendar to go with this because it is an outline, but I would include the date the assignment is due on the syllabus.
5. What changes would you make to the course conversations?
- I think the second conversation under “Christ-Centered, Gospel-Transformational Preaching” could be extended. The Prophet, Priest, King model is a critical piece to personal development because each teacher will have a natural bent towards one of them. Explaining in further detail what each one is and how to supplement the ones you are not strong at would be a huge benefit to the students’ development as a teacher.
6. Please include any additional comments you may like to include.
- The material is very “cosmic” in that it is a lot of big ideas that could get lost in the transition to applying them personally to preaching. I think the questions of “what” is being preached and “why” it is being preached are clearly defined and explicated, but the question of “how” to implement these ideas could be another aspect of the conversations being had in further detail. The “Preaching Implications” are very helpful but even that next step of hyper-practicality would be useful.
7. Please identify your general role at Grace Church:

Pastoral Staff ☐ Ministry Staff ☐ Intern ☒

Cultor House Preaching Course Survey

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Using the scale below, please select the appropriate number for each statement by placing an 'x' in the corresponding box.

Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree
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In the syllabus, for a Cultor House participant...		1	2	3	4	5
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15.	The class schedule does not need to be modified.					
16.	The course conversations are clear.					
17.	The course conversations are reasonable.					
18.	The course conversations do not need to be modified.					

Please type your responses for the questions below.

1. For the items listed above, please provide brief explanations for each statement rated with a 1 or 2, identifying the number of the statement followed by the comments.

NA

2. Please identify 3 strengths of the materials provided.

Strength 1: I very much so like the surprise assignments, creating opportunities for students to be humbled by failure, exposing their need for instruction and learning. New teachers always overestimate the simplicity of preaching.

Strength 2: The specific do's and don'ts regarding preaching delivery, very helpful practical advise. In my experience, good content with bad delivery may never help anyone.

Strength 3: the sermon labs, both creating outlines and delivering the messages. Having students actually attempt to preach and use the tools given them, and then having the opportunity to be evaluated, would be the best learning tool for me as a student

3. Please identify 3 weaknesses of the materials provided.

Weakness 1: an potential overemphasis on the gospel answer being integrated into every sermon outline.

Weakness 2: needing more equipping on how to formulate effective illustrations.

Weakness 3: needing more equipping on improving your delivery, potentially overweighed with helpful details about content.

4. What changes would you make to the syllabus?

I might do more practice sermons, in addition to the ones already scheduled for the course, and include them earlier on in the course so that students see the practical relevance of the theological and philosophical issues that are dealt with throughout the course.

5. What changes would you make to the course conversations?

I'd consider including an exercise that would allow individual students to identify 1) the strengths and weaknesses of their preaching, 2) their unique voice and 3) how to maintain authenticity by embracing their voice, and therefore not neutralizing themselves in an effort to be standardized or copy another preacher.

6. Please include any additional comments you may like to include.

In my personal experience, trying to preach and failing to preach effectively, for a year, was necessary before philosophical, theological, and even practical knowledge about effective preaching became relevant and comprehensible. Any way the course requires students to practice sermons in front of audiences would in my opinion help them learn how the tools this course provides them can be leveraged to be a more effective preacher.

7. Please identify your general role at Grace Church:

Pastoral Staff ___ Ministry Staff ___ Intern ___

Cultor House Preaching Course Survey

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Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

- In the syllabus, for a Cultor House participant...**
1. The course objectives are clear.
 2. The course objectives are reasonable.
 3. The course objectives do not need to be modified.
 4. The course procedures are clear.
 5. The course procedures are reasonable.
 6. The course procedures do not need to be modified.
 7. The course requirements are clear.
 8. The course requirements are reasonable.
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 10. The course textbooks are clear.
 11. The course textbooks are reasonable.
 12. The course textbooks do not need to be modified.
 13. The class schedule is clear.
 14. The class schedule is reasonable.
 15. The class schedule does not need to be modified.
 16. The course conversations are clear.
 17. The course conversations are reasonable.
 18. The course conversations do not need to be modified.

1	2	3	4	5
				x
			x	
			x	
			x	
			x	
			x	
			X	
	X			
	X			
			x	
			X	
			X	
			X	
			X	
		X		
			X	
		x		

Please type your responses for the questions below.

1. For the items listed above, please provide brief explanations for each statement rated with a 1 or 2, identifying the number of the statement followed by the comments.

8 – The assumption of use of a manuscript for preaching, while certainly a good discipline, may adversely affect the sermon's delivery (based on a student's own preaching style) and, thus, the sermon's evaluation (being evaluated based on a required delivery *form* to which the student may or may be naturally inclined).

2. Please identify 3 strengths of the materials provided.

- The rationale behind the surprise assignment shows depth of purpose in the actions taken by the instructor very early on, to best prepare the student to truly learn and succeed in the course's long run.

- The material consistently stops to supply illustrations, implications, and examples of the point at hand to help the student get a more nuanced understanding of the concepts.

- There is a well-rounded curriculum. It gives strong definition/direction, thoroughly shows reasoning, interaction with outside material (books, sermons, etc.), and in-house practice.

3. Please identify 3 weaknesses of the materials provided.

- Having students memorize a supplied definition of the gospel, rather than using that as an example. Having students come up with their own definition based on Scripture could be a helpful exercise to drive home the lesson on the gospel and shape their preaching.

- Formatting. It would be far easier to digest the flow of argument and content itself if there was more consistency and a thorough revisiting of the flow of the content on the page for better consumption. There are inconsistencies in spacing, numbering, and layout across different sessions/conversations (e.g., some areas double-spaced, others not).

- Needs even more focus on delivery – and how one might discover their own voice and delivery.

4. What changes would you make to the syllabus?

- Revise minor grammatical errors (e.g., textbooks page, “2nd Ed.” vs “2nd Edition”).

Page 7 – “We are the mouthpieces ~~uses~~ to speak to the world. “

- Move points 3 & 4 under “Christ-Centered, Gospel-Transformational Preaching” to Conversation 6 (“What is the Gospel?”)

5. What changes would you make to the course conversations?

Weave some of the courses strengths (Prophet/King/Priest model, p. 11) through the entire course. A strong, central model needs repetition to develop.

Focus more on the importance of directional application of the text to your listeners, emphasizing contextualization.

6. Please include any additional comments you may like to include.

7. Please identify your general role at Grace Church:

Pastoral Staff ☐ Ministry Staff ☒ Intern ☐

Cultor House Preaching Course Survey

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Using the scale below, please select the appropriate number for each statement by placing an 'x' in the corresponding box.

Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree
-------------------	---	---	---	---	---	----------------

In the syllabus, for a Cultor House participant...		1	2	3	4	5
1.	The course objectives are clear.					x
2.	The course objectives are reasonable.					x
3.	The course objectives do not need to be modified.					x
4.	The course procedures are clear.					x
5.	The course procedures are reasonable.					x
6.	The course procedures do not need to be modified.					x
7.	The course requirements are clear.					x
8.	The course requirements are reasonable.					x
9.	The course requirements do not need to be modified.					x
10.	The course textbooks are clear.					x
11.	The course textbooks are reasonable.					x
12.	The course textbooks do not need to be modified.					x
13.	The class schedule is clear.					x
14.	The class schedule is reasonable.					x
15.	The class schedule does not need to be modified.					x
16.	The course conversations are clear.					x
17.	The course conversations are reasonable.					x
18.	The course conversations do not need to be modified.					x

Please type your responses for the questions below.

1. For the items listed above, please provide brief explanations for each statement rated with a 1 or 2, identifying the number of the statement followed by the comments.

2. Please identify 3 strengths of the materials provided.

I think it is a good mix of the mechanics (Robinson) and the dynamics (Piper, Heisler) of preaching.

3. Please identify 3 weaknesses of the materials provided.

I thought the materials were good.

4. What changes would you make to the syllabus?

I liked the balance of it. I'm not sure I would do the surprise assignment...I don't know if it would humble them the way we would expect.

5. What changes would you make to the course conversations?

None.

6. Please include any additional comments you may like to include.

7. Please identify your general role at Grace Church:

Pastoral Staff x Ministry Staff Intern

Cultor House Preaching Course Survey

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In the syllabus, for a Cultor House participant...		1	2	3	4	5
1.	The course objectives are clear.					x
2.	The course objectives are reasonable.					x
3.	The course objectives do not need to be modified.					x
4.	The course procedures are clear.					x
5.	The course procedures are reasonable.					x
6.	The course procedures do not need to be modified.					x
7.	The course requirements are clear.					x
8.	The course requirements are reasonable.					x
9.	The course requirements do not need to be modified.					x
10.	The course textbooks are clear.				x	
11.	The course textbooks are reasonable.				x	
12.	The course textbooks do not need to be modified.					x
13.	The class schedule is clear.					x
14.	The class schedule is reasonable.					x
15.	The class schedule does not need to be modified.					x
16.	The course conversations are clear.				x	
17.	The course conversations are reasonable.					x
18.	The course conversations do not need to be modified.				x	

Please type your responses for the questions below.

1. For the items listed above, please provide brief explanations for each statement rated with a 1 or 2, identifying the number of the statement followed by the comments.

None

2. Please identify 3 strengths of the materials provided.

1. Its emphasis on gospel-centered preaching. Reinvigorates the term “gospel” for a generation that is the product of the overuse and misuse of the term. Through this material, the gospel regains its robustness. The gospel shifts from a tool in the toolbox to the definition and purpose of preaching.
2. Threefold Good News (Doctrine, Personal, Cultural).
3. I love the surprise assignment at the beginning of the material. I think it’s helpful for class participants to experience this disequilibrium within the course early on in order to make them better learners during the remainder of the course.

3. Please identify 3 weaknesses of the materials provided.

Since this material would be presented to a mixed gender class of male and female interns, the issue of gender and spiritual leadership needs to be addressed. What is the basic definition of preaching? What are the teaching, communication, and spiritual leadership roles appropriate for women? How many of the ideas communicated in this course are transferrable to a woman who is communicating about the Bible? And in what contexts and ways does the role of preaching fall primarily on man?

4. What changes would you make to the syllabus?

No changes

5. What changes would you make to the course conversations?

No other changes

6. Please include any additional comments you may like to include.

7. Please identify your general role at Grace Church:

Pastoral Staff ☐ Ministry Staff/Resident ☒ Intern ☐

Cultor House Preaching Course Survey

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In the syllabus, for a Cultor House participant...		1	2	3	4	5
1.	The course objectives are clear.					x
2.	The course objectives are reasonable.					x
3.	The course objectives do not need to be modified.				x	
4.	The course procedures are clear.					x
5.	The course procedures are reasonable.					x
6.	The course procedures do not need to be modified.					x
7.	The course requirements are clear.					x
8.	The course requirements are reasonable.					x
9.	The course requirements do not need to be modified.					x
10.	The course textbooks are clear.					x
11.	The course textbooks are reasonable.					x
12.	The course textbooks do not need to be modified.				x	
13.	The class schedule is clear.					x
14.	The class schedule is reasonable.					x
15.	The class schedule does not need to be modified.					x
16.	The course conversations are clear.					x
17.	The course conversations are reasonable.					x
18.	The course conversations do not need to be modified.				x	

Please type your responses for the questions below.

1. For the items listed above, please provide brief explanations for each statement rated with a 1 or 2, identifying the number of the statement followed by the comments.
2. **Please identify 3 strengths of the materials provided.** I think the material provided is filled with solid truth and strength. First of all, it makes much of God's glory in preaching. Reminding people that ultimately life is not about us being front & center, but about God being front & center in all of life. Secondly, this material makes much of the gospel. Underscoring the truth that the gospel is not just for those beginning the Christian life, but the ultimate source of power from beginning to end. Thirdly, this material makes much of Jesus Christ. At the end of the day, the bible is not merely about the heroes and villains in history, but about what Christ accomplished in his life, death, and resurrection.
3. **Please identify 3 weaknesses of the materials provided.** I had to work hard to find weaknesses or potential weaknesses in this material. Its really good stuff. One area of weakness may be in the area of practical application. At the end of each conversation the word 'implication', was used as opposed to the word 'application'. I think you could say more around the idea of 'directional' preaching. Along those same lines more could be said regarding the value of 'tension' in preaching. We don't want to be authoritarian and just beat people up, but we do live in a culture where people hear artificial transitions to Jesus at the end of every sermon. People don't always need to leave feeling good about themselves. Which raises hermeneutical questions. The bible is ultimately about Jesus, but the bible also gives us lots of direction. And we can't say everything there is to say in every sermon. Finally, I think more could be said about the 'relational' part of preaching. Bert Decker wrote a book entitled, "You've got to be believed to be heard." That doesn't mean that everyone has to know you personally, but people do have to trust or believe you in order to be heard. Ultimately so much of preaching/communication is traced back to credibility. Can I trust you? You may know everything there is to know about redemptive historical preaching, but if I don't trust you then I won't hear what you have to say.
4. **What changes would you make to the syllabus?** I would add sections on directional preaching, creating tension in preaching, and underscore the importance of being believable and credible in preaching (which shapes what we say and how we say it).
5. **What changes would you make to the course conversations?** See above
6. **Please include any additional comments you may like to include.** I think this is really good stuff and a great introduction for our Cultor House people. Thanks for letting me read through it.
7. **Please identify your general role at Grace Church:**

Pastoral Staff x Ministry Staff Intern

Cultor House Preaching Course Survey

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In the syllabus, for a Cultor House participant...		1	2	3	4	5
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4.	The course procedures are clear.					x
5.	The course procedures are reasonable.				x	
6.	The course procedures do not need to be modified.				x	
7.	The course requirements are clear.					x
8.	The course requirements are reasonable.				x	
9.	The course requirements do not need to be modified.				x	
10.	The course textbooks are clear.					x
11.	The course textbooks are reasonable.					x
12.	The course textbooks do not need to be modified.					x
13.	The class schedule is clear.					x
14.	The class schedule is reasonable.				x	
15.	The class schedule does not need to be modified.				x	
16.	The course conversations are clear.				x	
17.	The course conversations are reasonable.				x	
18.	The course conversations do not need to be modified.				x	

Please type your responses for the questions below.

1. For the items listed above, please provide brief explanations for each statement rated with a 1 or 2, identifying the number of the statement followed by the comments.
2. Please identify 3 strengths of the materials provided.

Course exercises will challenge the class members, but form their thinking on preaching through the process.

The 12 Implications of the Gospel on preaching is robust and helpful in teaching how to think biblically and theologically about preaching.

Doctrine, Personal, and Cultural is a helpful framework to examine sermons and determine areas of need.

Appendix on Evaluating Sermons is thorough and complete. It will be a great resource for each student to use throughout their ministry.

3. Please identify 3 weaknesses of the materials provided.

Because this course is designed for young 20's, their different backgrounds will cause their understanding of the gospel to vary greatly. I would recommend including a book in the required reading that focuses on their understanding of the gospel in its depths.

I would recommend requiring more than 1 sermon from the students.

4. What changes would you make to the syllabus?

For a preaching class, I would recommend requiring more than 1 sermon.

5. What changes would you make to the course conversations?

No changes needed.

6. Please include any additional comments you may like to include.

7. Please identify your general role at Grace Church:

Pastoral Staff

—

Ministry Staff —

Intern —

Cultor House Preaching Course Survey

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In the syllabus, for a Cultor House participant...		1	2	3	4	5
1.	The course objectives are clear.					x
2.	The course objectives are reasonable.				x	
3.	The course objectives do not need to be modified.			x		
4.	The course procedures are clear.					x
5.	The course procedures are reasonable.					x
6.	The course procedures do not need to be modified.					x
7.	The course requirements are clear.					x
8.	The course requirements are reasonable.				x	
9.	The course requirements do not need to be modified.			x		
10.	The course textbooks are clear.					x
11.	The course textbooks are reasonable.				x	
12.	The course textbooks do not need to be modified.				x	
13.	The class schedule is clear.					x
14.	The class schedule is reasonable.					x
15.	The class schedule does not need to be modified.			x		
16.	The course conversations are clear.				x	
17.	The course conversations are reasonable.				x	
18.	The course conversations do not need to be modified.					x

Please type your responses for the questions below.

1. For the items listed above, please provide brief explanations for each statement rated with a 1 or 2, identifying the number of the statement followed by the comments.
2. Please identify 3 strengths of the materials provided.
 - a. Significant variety of educational strategies. It allows for students who access information in different ways to learn the material in accessible mediums/modes.
 - b. The lab portion of the class encourages what is known in educational psychology as the reverse classroom. Students read and learn on their own and then are able to work through practical application during the class. (i.e. prepare/deliver a sermon.)
 - c. The course also allows for students to participate in critiquing each other, which, in a safe environment, should encourage learning from other's perspectives, gifts, abilities, life experiences, etc.
3. Please identify 3 weaknesses of the materials provided.
 - a. One potential weakness of the course is the idea that the gift or natural ability of preaching can be simply taught in a class, whether that purpose is intentional or not. (i.e. I take the preaching class, I become a great preacher.)
 - b. Preparation of one sermon for the entire semester could produce an unrealistic expectation and availability of time, preparation, level of production, etc.
 - c. Untrained students critiquing untrained students on something neither of them are very experienced at might produce arrogance in some and anxiety in others while not producing a lot of valuable feedback.
4. What changes would you make to the syllabus?
 - a. I personally would increase the number of "surprise sermons", possibly to a weekly occurrence. I think there is something significant to be learned in that exercise from a character development standpoint. It also helps to level the playing field, and to expose those who might have a stronger gifting of preaching.
 - b. You could also encourage/challenging the students to observe in person different preachers throughout the semester. Seeing something on a screen vs. in-person could provide an additional angle of examination and study. You could also encourage or require that they observe these in different denominations within the evangelical church.

5. What changes would you make to the course conversations?
- a. Not sure if I would make any direct changes to the conversations. I think the language “conversation” is helpful and implies the necessity of dialogue in the classroom. I think conversation and intentional dialogue is significantly important to the true absorption and application of the material. Critical thinking and application is one of the highest levels of cognitive thought. Simple memorization of ideas is one of the easiest and least effective forms of cognitive thought. It only equips the learner to regurgitate information, not to apply it critically.
6. Please include any additional comments you may like to include.
- a. I love the emphasis and weight placed on a correct understanding of the gospel and how that should permeate your preaching.
 - b. I think the emphasis on how the word of God was communicated through the scriptures, the disciples, and early church leaders is incredibly important. The weight and importance of preaching the word of God cannot be emphasized enough.
7. Please identify your general role at Grace Church:

Pastoral Staff ☐ Ministry Staff ☒ Intern ☐

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Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree
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- In the syllabus, for a Cultor House participant...**
1. The course objectives are clear.
 2. The course objectives are reasonable.
 3. The course objectives do not need to be modified.
 4. The course procedures are clear.
 5. The course procedures are reasonable.
 6. The course procedures do not need to be modified.
 7. The course requirements are clear.
 8. The course requirements are reasonable.
 9. The course requirements do not need to be modified.
 10. The course textbooks are clear.
 11. The course textbooks are reasonable.
 12. The course textbooks do not need to be modified.
 13. The class schedule is clear.
 14. The class schedule is reasonable.
 15. The class schedule does not need to be modified.
 16. The course conversations are clear.
 17. The course conversations are reasonable.
 18. The course conversations do not need to be modified.

1	2	3	4	5
				x
			x	
	x			
				x
				x
				x
			x	
		x		
		x		
				x
			x	
			x	
			x	
		x		

Please type your responses for the questions below.

1. For the items listed above, please provide brief explanations for each statement rated with a 1 or 2, identifying the number of the statement followed by the comments.

For # 3 – Not sure one of the course objectives needs to be learning how to evaluate sermons. Maybe evaluating for the purposes of learning how to craft them would be more suited to the course. Perhaps helping students identify their own pitfalls through the evaluation of others would be more beneficial.

2. Please identify 3 strengths of the materials provided.

Comprehensive, exposing & constructive.

3. Please identify 3 weaknesses of the materials provided.

Maybe too heavy on evaluating others. Lots of techniques discussed; could benefit from a more narrow focus on how to construct and deliver an effective sermon.

4. What changes would you make to the syllabus?

Narrow the scope. Course might be trying to do too much in trying to explain the theological reasons around WHY we preach instead of focused on preparation and execution. You could simplify around two main ideas of preparation and delivery.

5. What changes would you make to the course conversations?

If the scope were simplified, show how each conversation relates to the big picture of the course. Is this conversation concerned with preparation or delivery? Why is it important?

6. Please include any additional comments you may like to include.

The sources and materials are good

7. Please identify your general role at Grace Church:

Pastoral Staff

Ministry Staff ___

Intern ___

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Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree
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In the syllabus, for a Cultor House participant...		1	2	3	4	5
1.	The course objectives are clear.				Y	
2.	The course objectives are reasonable.				y	
3.	The course objectives do not need to be modified.				y	
4.	The course procedures are clear.				y	
5.	The course procedures are reasonable.				y	
6.	The course procedures do not need to be modified.				y	
7.	The course requirements are clear.				y	
8.	The course requirements are reasonable.				y	
9.	The course requirements do not need to be modified.				y	
10.	The course textbooks are clear.				y	
11.	The course textbooks are reasonable.				y	
12.	The course textbooks do not need to be modified.				y	
13.	The class schedule is clear.				y	
14.	The class schedule is reasonable.				y	
15.	The class schedule does not need to be modified.				y	
16.	The course conversations are clear.				y	
17.	The course conversations are reasonable.				y	
18.	The course conversations do not need to be modified.				y	

Please type your responses for the questions below.

1. For the items listed above, please provide brief explanations for each statement rated with a 1 or 2, identifying the number of the statement followed by the comments.
2. Please identify 3 strengths of the materials provided.
Thorough spelling out a preaching process.
Good illustrations of kinds of preaching.
Focused on bringing Gospel to the center in preaching.
3. Please identify 3 weaknesses of the materials provided.
The course could be compressed. Felt long.
Though the Gospel is critical, it should be highlighted in messages where it's the focus rather than every message. Balance work/effort we are to do with Gospel
4. What changes would you make to the syllabus?
5. What changes would you make to the course conversations?
I would cut the length of the Gospel reminder for preaching and tighten up the Preaching methodology content.
6. Please include any additional comments you may like to include.
Chris Curtis for president.
7. Please identify your general role at Grace Church:

Pastoral Staff – ___ Ministry Staff ___ Intern ___
Anderson Campus
Pastor

Cultor House Preaching Course Survey

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Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree
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In the syllabus, for a Cultor House participant...		1	2	3	4	5
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2.	The course objectives are reasonable.				X	
3.	The course objectives do not need to be modified.				X	
4.	The course procedures are clear.					X
5.	The course procedures are reasonable.					X
6.	The course procedures do not need to be modified.				X	
7.	The course requirements are clear.					X
8.	The course requirements are reasonable.					X
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14.	The class schedule is reasonable.					X
15.	The class schedule does not need to be modified.					X
16.	The course conversations are clear.				X	
17.	The course conversations are reasonable.				X	
18.	The course conversations do not need to be modified.				X	

Please type your responses for the questions below.

1. For the items listed above, please provide brief explanations for each statement rated with a 1 or 2, identifying the number of the statement followed by the comments.
2. Please identify 3 strengths of the materials provided.
 - 1) The class topics and assignments due dates are very clear.
 - 2) The course outline and requirements are very clear. I feel as if I was a student about to take this course I would be very clear and have a good understanding of what the class would be about
 - 3) Very clear on what each course conversation will be about and the expectations that you would have for the students.

3. Please identify 3 weaknesses of the materials provided.

1) As a student, I think I would want to deliver more than just one sermon.

4. What changes would you make to the syllabus?

It is very clear and easy to understand. I cannot think of an area that needs more clarity from the syllabus.

5. What changes would you make to the course conversations?
Do not know enough about teaching to have a valid comment.

6. Please include any additional comments you may like to include.

Chris, as you are aware I am a very inexperienced teacher. I have not received any formal classes on how to teach or even study the bible. I found that it was hard for me to criticize your material, solely due to the fact that I don't know enough about preaching or studying the bible to even have valid opinions. Instead, what I tried to do was simply read the syllabus and respond as if I was a student preparing to take your class. I hope that my responses are still helpful and useful for your syllabus evaluation.

7. Please identify your general role at Grace Church:

Pastoral Staff ☐ Ministry Staff ☐ Intern ☒

Cultor House Preaching Course Survey

This survey is designed to gain your feedback as it relates to the future preaching course to be designed for those participating in Cultor House. Your feedback is important because it will help to shape the design and implementation of the course. The accompany document includes a syllabus and instructional materials used for a course taught at Trinity College of Florida. After reviewing the syllabus and materials, please answer the following the following question designed to discover how the course may be adapted to fit the needs of Cultor House participants. Thank you for time and contribution to this important work.

Using the scale below, please select the appropriate number for each statement by placing an 'x' in the corresponding box.

Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree
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In the syllabus, for a Cultor House participant...		1	2	3	4	5
1.	The course objectives are clear.					x
2.	The course objectives are reasonable.					x
3.	The course objectives do not need to be modified.					x
4.	The course procedures are clear.				x	
5.	The course procedures are reasonable.					x
6.	The course procedures do not need to be modified.				x	
7.	The course requirements are clear.					x
8.	The course requirements are reasonable.				x	
9.	The course requirements do not need to be modified.				x	
10.	The course textbooks are clear.				x	

11.	The course textbooks are reasonable.				X
12.	The course textbooks do not need to be modified.				X
13.	The class schedule is clear.			X	
14.	The class schedule is reasonable.				X
15.	The class schedule does not need to be modified.			X	
16.	The course conversations are clear.				X
17.	The course conversations are reasonable.				X
18.	The course conversations do not need to be modified.				X

Please type your responses for the questions below.

1. For the items listed above, please provide brief explanations for each statement rated with a 1 or 2, identifying the number of the statement followed by the comments.
2. Please identify 3 strengths of the materials provided.

The material is thorough, clear, and consistent. visualizing the course based on this document is not difficult.

3. Please identify 3 weaknesses of the materials provided.

The schedule is a little unclear. Partly because I'm not sure how long a time period this is supposed to be taking place over and how or if the course could be adjusted to fit within certain timeframes. Might be nitpicking, but there are some inconsistencies with comma usage. Sometimes Oxford commas are used and sometimes they are not. Some pronouns referring to God are not capitalized.

4. What changes would you make to the syllabus?

No major changes. Maybe give the class a the title "Homiletics."

5. What changes would you make to the course conversations?

No suggestions. They are clear and seem to have good depth.

6. Please include any additional comments you may like to include.

The points made in the materials and the subject matter covered are well researched. Scripture is cited relentlessly which, to me, helps everything seem trustworthy, and quotes from heroes of the faith (and Rudyard Kipling) help to give it extra personality and make it relatable.

7. Please identify your general role at Grace Church:

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12.	The course textbooks do not need to be modified.					X
13.	The class schedule is clear.					X
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15.	The class schedule does not need to be modified.					X
16.	The course conversations are clear.					X
17.	The course conversations are reasonable.					X
18.	The course conversations do not need to be modified.					X

Please type your responses for the questions below.

1. For the items listed above, please provide brief explanations for each statement rated with a 1 or 2, identifying the number of the statement followed by the comments.
2. Please identify 3 strengths of the materials provided.
 - 1- The surprise assignments seem very well thought out. I think it is a great assignment idea since it tests on the spot thinking and processing as well as fulfills the "purpose" of this assignment section.
 - 2- I like how in-depth the conversations are.
 - 3- The discussion questions are very well thought out.
 - 4- The section on delivery techniques seems very helpful and easy to understand
3. Please identify 3 weaknesses of the materials provided.

Nothing really seems "weak". The sections below are my only thoughts on changes and adjustments.
4. What changes would you make to the syllabus?
 - 1- I think you could have less absences. Maybe 3? Also a little confused by "The students status will be up for review" under course procedures.
 - 2- I think the course could have more writing assignments and sermon prep? Maybe I missed some of that on the syllabus. And maybe some of the sermon prep is covered in non-sermon writing assignments (like the surprise assignments).
5. What changes would you make to the course conversations?
 - After the first surprise assignment section, should the goal be for them to "fail"? The note at the end seems a little harsh.
6. Please include any additional comments you may like to include.
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5.	The course procedures are reasonable.				x	
6.	The course procedures do not need to be modified.				x	
7.	The course requirements are clear.				x	
8.	The course requirements are reasonable.				x	
9.	The course requirements do not need to be modified.				x	
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17.	The course conversations are reasonable.				x	
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Please type your responses for the questions below.

1. For the items listed above, please provide brief explanations for each statement rated with a 1 or 2, identifying the number of the statement followed by the comments.
2. **Please identify 3 strengths of the materials provided.**
 - Syllabus provides clear and succinct outlines for course conversations – one can understand/review the theme of a class by reading class outlines.
 - One of the more thorough conversations is that surrounding the Gospel and its significance in preaching and beyond, this would be helpful for a student even if they were not considering ever formally preaching.
 - Course material not only instructs *how* to preach, but communicates the *value* of preaching and its importance in ministry; this is huge for those being developed as leaders in the church.
3. Please identify 3 weaknesses of the materials provided.
 - I found some of the language to be cerebral, would need a bit of explanation to understand some of the “Christian” terms.
 - The surprise assignment in conversations 2-3 where students are given a passage to preach: I would thoroughly enjoy something like this (I think), however I don’t think it would be helpful for all personalities.
 -
4. What changes would you make to the syllabus?
None.
5. What changes would you make to the course conversations?
If applied within Cultor House, perhaps relaxing the focus on the details of preaching and approaching the topic as more of an assessment of preaching, rather than a course design to begin equipping students to one day preach.
6. Please include any additional comments you may like to include.
7. Please identify your general role at Grace Church:

Pastoral Staff ☐ Ministry Staff ☐ Intern ☒

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Please type your responses for the questions below.

1. For the items listed above, please provide brief explanations for each statement rated with a 1 or 2, identifying the number of the statement followed by the comments.

My 2 ratings are related to the amount of modifications that would have to be made to make the course possible as part of the Cultor House program.

2. Please identify 3 weaknesses of the materials provided

- In current form it may be very difficult for someone without a religion/ministry background
- It should be considered how motivated someone would be to participate in some of the course assignments and conversations if they had no interest in preaching
- overall too much material here to cover as part of a Cultor/Kairos curriculum

3. What changes would you make to the syllabus?

The overall organization and layout of the syllabus was well done and easy to follow.

4. What changes would you make to the course conversations?

I may leave out some of the conversations that have more to do with the delivery of the message. If this class is meant to be edited to reach student who are not pursuing full-time ministry it would be beneficial to focus more of the analysis of the text rather than delivery in the form of an audience. It may also be helpful to include some conversations about how "preaching" can be incorporated into settings other than church.

5. Please include any additional comments you may like to include.

There is definitely some material covered in the syllabus that would be relevant and worth discussing as part of an intern program here at Grace. As a whole though it would most likely not be suited for someone not interested in pursuing full-time ministry.

6. Please identify your general role at Grace Church:

Pastoral Staff — Ministry Staff — Intern X

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Please type your responses for the questions below.

1. For the items listed above, please provide brief explanations for each statement rated with a 1 or 2, identifying the number of the statement followed by the comments.
2. Please identify 3 strengths of the materials provided.
 1. Clear outline of purpose and goal of preaching
 2. Leaves room for students to individualize and use their unique identities in preaching without straying from the purposes and goals
 3. Good mix of practical and spiritual
3. Please identify 3 weaknesses of the materials provided.
 1. Only opportunities for practice are at beginning and end of course
4. What changes would you make to the syllabus?
Include more opportunities to practice preaching throughout the course so that students can see how they are improving and where they still need work.
5. What changes would you make to the course conversations?
Possibly include something about personal spiritual health.
6. Please include any additional comments you may like to include.
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Please type your responses for the questions below.

1. For the items listed above, please provide brief explanations for each statement rated with a 1 or 2, identifying the number of the statement followed by the comments.
2. Please identify 3 strengths of the materials provided.
 - Detailed and easy to understand
 - Schedule is outlined so that it is clear what is required and when
 - Written in a simplistic and effective manner.
3. Please identify 3 weaknesses of the materials provided.
 - a. I think there is some inconsistency in the how the material was written. Did not see a lot, but on page three, the text after "memorization" does not seem congruent with the style of the other text. "periodically we will memorize ... together." I think it should say something along the lines of "students will be required to memorize scripture throughout the course."
 - b. Outline on page 5 could more clearly state when the books should be read and when they are due
 - c. I think memorizing more scripture could be an interesting exercise.... Maybe you could add more verses/text to be memorized.
4. What changes would you make to the syllabus?
 - a. It might help to provide a visual outline of the class schedule. Perhaps a calendar that has the days. Not vital, just maybe a nice addition.
5. What changes would you make to the course conversations?
 - a. I like the conversation/sermon labs. It might be helpful to have one more and it might be helpful to throw one in somewhere in the middle of the course. Might be an interesting way for students to gauge their progress
6. Please include any additional comments you may like to include.
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Please type your responses for the questions below.

1. For the items listed above, please provide brief explanations for each statement rated with a 1 or 2, identifying the number of the statement followed by the comments.

I think that the course schedule is a bit lengthy in its number of sessions and is intensive for the work of someone who isn't about to go to seminary. I can see how it would be taxing on someone.

2. Please identify 3 strengths of the materials provided.

One of the strengths would be how Scripture backs up the different points throughout the course. For instance, the Core Convictions about preaching are all based on Scripture/backed with it.

The Nature of the Gospel section provides well-articulated framework for understanding how the gospel needs to shape the way one preaches. I like how different components of the gospel are laid out so we can understand what it means to incorporate it into sermons.

There are many thought provoking questions for the reading reviews and discussions. I think that they are helpful for understanding the material.

3. Please identify 3 weaknesses of the materials provided.

There's a lot of heavy material for students. I'm not clear on why the course would be of value for someone who doesn't plan to go into preaching because it is challenging in work load.

The exercise where students have to leave the room and come back with a sermon prepared is really daunting for someone who has zero experience in preaching! I don't know how beneficial it would be without some kind of preparation for it or maybe a different exercise where students could practice without being thrown into it.

4. What changes would you make to the syllabus?

I would lighten the load by taking out some of the required readings, I would maybe have fewer sessions and simplify each session for non-religious studies majors.

5. What changes would you make to the course conversations?

Make some of the questions more approachable/understandable for someone who has no background in preaching/religious studies.

6. Please include any additional comments you may like to include.

7. Please identify your general role at Grace Church:

Pastoral Staff ☐ Ministry Staff ☐ Intern ☒

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VITA

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